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ABOUT RUSSIA

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By ERNEST J. P. BENN

Author of
"The Return to Laissez Faire"

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CHAPTER I

ON GOING TO RUSSIA

I NEVER have been to Russia, and I never shall go to Russia so long as the Soviet régime, with its present ideas, is in force. How then, you will ask, can I possibly be qualified to throw any further light on the subject of Soviet Russia? Is it not my duty, if I am earnestly seeking to understand the problems of Bolshevism, to go to Russia and see for myself, on the spot, exactly what is happening? There would seem at first sight to be only one answer to the latter question. The Bolsheviks themselves are constantly sending us invitations to go and see them, and in the case of most other people no doubt could exist as to the wisdom of accepting. When, however, we examine the matter a little more carefully, the dangers of a visit to Russia—not the personal dangers, but the dangers to a right understanding of our subject, as well as to a great many other people—begin to be apparent, and I hope, therefore, that before I finish this chapter I shall have established quite finally the fact that, by refusing to visit Russia, far from disqualifying myself as an authority on the subject, I have fitted myself more specially as a fair judge of the great problem which that country presents.

Forgetting Russia, consider for a moment the conditions which an ordinary person expects to find, if not requires, in any place he ordinarily visits. In this matter Russia presents aspects that are so entirely novel as to force us to think things

out quite afresh. If I were sent on a voyage of enquiry and investigation to America or Germany or Japan, there are quite a number of simple common little things connected with my trip that would not need mentioning or even thinking about. I should go to any of these places by myself. I should be free to go and to come as I chose. I should arm myself with introductions to members of the Government and members of the Opposition. If there were more than two political parties, I should seek out the leaders of several of them and strive to understand and compare their points of view and explain their differences. I should put in my bag not only introductions to politicians, but the names and addresses of leading men in the various universities and other centres of thought. Among the calls which I should make and the interviews I should seek would be at the newspaper offices, where I should much enjoy discussion with editors who took opposing views. I have never failed, on any visit that I have made to foreign countries, to talk to employers and the officers of employers' organisations, or to working people and the officers of workers' trade unions. To complete my picture of life in the country visited and round off my impressions of its problems, I should seek admission to clubs and institutes. I should attend lectures and debates ; indeed, in my case, I should probably lecture myself, for I know of no better way of getting into touch with the sort of people I want to meet. I should visit

the play and the cinema, and try to judge, from the variety and character of the shows which individual theatre proprietors were offering to the public, the quality of the artistic taste of the people.

There are other incidental things which are so common and usual as to be forgotten when one undertakes an ordinary journey. For example, I require the liberty to write to my friends in the country and at home, with the assurance that I can write freely and confidentially without damage to myself or to them. I also like to have the liberty to take photographs, to sketch, to scribble, and, having done so, to put my papers in my bag and have them regarded as my personal and private property. As I have reached a fairly advanced stage of life and so far escaped the suspicion of being a criminal, I have never had to submit to an examination of my notebook at any frontier or in any other circumstances, and I do not propose, even at the expense of denying myself the pleasure of a trip to Russia, to run the risk of that indignity. Another little detail—I should like to telephone without the knowledge that a detective is tapping the line, a freedom which is not available in the Government hotels, the only accommodation at my disposal in Russia.

All these are conditions which I am entitled to make. I cannot insist upon their concession to me, but I can and do decline to travel in places where such ordinary safeguards to decent existence are absent, and, so far as I know, Russia is

the only place where these things are denied. If I go to Russia I must be prepared at every turn to dispense with things which I regard as essential to my intellectual comfort, and without which I am completely unable to do justice to a mission of enquiry. I should require, for instance, the opportunity to talk to artists, writers, scientists, professors, and the sort of people that one would expect to meet in any properly constituted society. Mr. Stephen Graham, in *Russia in Division*, gives us long lists of all the best of Russian names, people now either shot or exiled. Mr. Graham wrote this interesting study in 1924, when the Revolution was still fairly new. At that time friends of Russia would offer the obvious apology that a revolution and a guillotine were inseparable at the start, and that, given time, the intellectual quality of Bolshevism would make amends. But on December 7th, 1929, Moscow tells us that a "Government purging commission" has examined 836 persons from the Academy of Sciences at Leningrad, and has dismissed 520 of them. As a result of these enquiries, another commission was sent to Leningrad, composed of Krylenko, the Public Prosecutor, Peters and Agranov, the last-named being an examining official of the Ogpu, to investigate the "criminal activity" of the academicians. A special enquiry, so the official news-sheet runs, will be made into the alleged counter-revolutionary sabotage of Professor Oldenburg, formerly the permanent secretary of the Academy. Is it unreasonable to

suggest that a visit to a country where the police officials are the judges of suitability for academic responsibility would not very materially further my search for truth and light?

But, as usual, the argument can be strengthened from the boasts and statements of the Russian authorities themselves. These people issue week by week (indeed, so liberal is their catholicity that they even send me a copy) a *Weekly News Bulletin*, published by the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. I am in so many words asked to acquiesce by my visit in the murder or the deportation of persons of known literary, artistic, or scientific qualifications, and to accept as substitutes for them the most amateur and stupid propagandist fumblers that it has been my experience to encounter.

Anyone who will take the trouble to examine the Bolshevik Press—and it must be said to the credit of the Bolsheviks that they make no effort to hide this side of their system—cannot fail to be struck with the simple fact that every day of the week numbers of Russians are shot. Methodical examination may show an exception here and there, but it is substantially true to say that no day has passed since the beginning of the Revolution without its quota of executions. No one who has looked into this matter can fail to be impressed with the trivial nature of the charges upon which many of these executions are made. To be "suspected of counter-revolutionary sympathies," for instance, is a

capital offence. The existence of a well thought-out system of terror, putting into the distant shade the worst of the frightfulness of the War period, is admitted. When we pass on to enquire how the victims are selected for the exercise, day by day, of this necessary terror, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that every foreigner who has visited Russia since the power of Lenin began has upon his head the blood of so many unfortunate Russians. The position is simple. To keep the people in order and the Bolsheviks in power, executions have to be made regularly and ruthlessly. Excuses must be found, and these excuses become more difficult to find as the spirit of the Russian gets lower and lower ; as his condition of slavery becomes worse and worse ; and as he has less and less incentive to offer excuses for punishment. So it becomes necessary to invent new crimes, for murders must go on. The power of the Government would dwindle rapidly from the moment when the people began to suspect any weakness.

It is thus a crime to give any information to a foreigner which might be to the advantage of a capitalist state. I had an illustration of the seriousness of this new crime when the official Press published particulars of the need for agricultural machinery and of its intention to make a contract for 10,000 tractors. A clerk in the Foreign Office at Moscow, in the most natural way in the world, called the attention of a member of the last British delegation to this

paragraph. That clerk disappeared the following day.

The wife of a foreign ambassador accredited to Moscow thought she would like to learn a little Russian. She discovered with some trouble an elderly Russian lady who was prepared to come to her for a couple of hours a day to give instruction in the Russian language. The arrangement lasted a week, after which the Russian lady failed to appear. Enquiries at her address elicited the information that she had not been home, and nobody knew anything of her whereabouts. The ambassador, feeling that he had some small grievance in the matter, sought an interview with Chicherin, prince of diplomats and most charming of men. Chicherin disclaimed all knowledge of or responsibility in the matter, professed to have made enquiries and to be quite unable to say what had happened to the lady, and smilingly assured his visitor that, Russia being a free country, she had probably taken a trip to the seaside.

In the ordinary way I should dismiss this sort of story. Travelling in the border States one is in danger of getting hardened to the horrors continually recounted of children forced to spy on their parents, husbands threatened that if they do not report their wives' movements regularly to the Ogpu the wives themselves will be made to suffer, and friends who dare not be seen in conversation together in public for fear that one of them will disappear next day.

One can hear enough on these lines in the criminal investigation department of any police force or in the secret service of any foreign office. The devious ways of the underworld have no interest for me, and when I read either in official papers or in Edgar Wallace of the kidnapping and murder of some spy or forger or purveyor of official secrets, I am left unmoved. But that sort of indifference must be discarded in dealing with Russia, because somehow or another one must explain to oneself how it comes about that these people can find day by day a never-ending supply of fodder for the Ogpu gunmen. Four or five weeks on the Russian border would supply volumes of stories such as these, which singly and by themselves are of little importance or value but which, collectively and studied in relation to the known facts of the system, constitute a body of evidence which no serious enquirer can afford to ignore.

If I went to Russia, then, I should have to face the fact that any Russian seen talking to me, unless it were part of his duty, would get on the list to keep the terror going. That, after all, it may be said, is nothing to do with me. I must not interfere in the internal arrangements of Russia. The Russians have the right to govern themselves in their own way, and if they decide in their wisdom to shoot old ladies, it is not for me to interfere. It does however give me an extremely adequate reason for avoiding the country.

Consider the matter in another of its aspects.

People to the number of 140 millions inside the closed border of Russia have for ten years past had no knowledge whatever of the happenings of the outside world, except such as has been vouchsafed to them by official publicists and journalists appointed to their posts by Communist authority, and doing their work subject to the approval of the official police. Is there any possible use in my talking to such people? There may be some use to them, but the use is not worth the risk that they run.

There has been nothing more stupid in inception, ludicrous in execution, and disastrous in results, for example, than the several visits of commercial delegations to Russia, but we must consider this question in another chapter. The business man is the most limited of creatures, and quite properly so. If he really understands his job, if he is the master of all the intricate complications of making and selling the article in which he is concerned, whatever it may be, then it is at least unusual that he should have any brain power left for the understanding of wider and bigger questions. It may be said of the business man that the more he knows about his job, the less he knows about the world, and if that is recognised and the business man is left to function freely in his own limited sphere, the economic side of things will prosper.

I cannot go to Russia for another reason. My habit when abroad is to make friends, and to accept all the hospitality that is offered to me,

and I do this because I always have the hope of being able to return the courtesy. It is indeed one of our satisfactions that my wife and I have been the means of introducing a good many foreigners to some knowledge of the home life of England. But I am offered a trip to Russia to be entertained at my own expense in a Government hotel with no prospect of making a Russian friend other than an accredited member of the Communist Party, and with no prospect of entertaining any Russian at home unless he come with a member of the Cheka at either elbow. Ordinary human relationships with these people are impossible, not because the rest of us will not do our part towards promoting them, but because the Communists will have none of them. An attempt was recently made to get the Russians into conference on the timber situation in Europe, and a meeting was actually called and held at Hamburg. It will be known to any who have been privileged to take part in meetings of this kind that their value consists not only in the usefulness of the formal proceedings, but in the informal touch which is thus established between members of the conference. Timber merchants from all parts of Europe gathered to meet the Russians. The Soviet timber expert duly appeared at the conference with a trusted Communist on either side. He took part in the discussions in that peculiar way which can only be understood by any who have tried to deal with these people. But no power on earth could get the Russian to a cup of

tea or even to a handshake outside the conference chamber. No European timber man feels that he knows anything more about, or has any more confidence in, the Russian timber position than he did before the conference took place.

How can I go to Russia when no Russian is allowed to come to me? The members of the Communist Party are the only people who ever come out of Russia freely. There are, I know, cases constantly occurring in which Russians other than Communists have been allowed over the border. I have had talks with one or two of them. And here I come up against one of those extraordinary difficulties that is peculiar to this extraordinary problem. These people in every case have left their families behind them as hostages. Each one of them was warned before leaving that any damage done by him to the reputation of Moscow would be repaid in damage to his family at home. All these things are admitted. It is not necessary to rely upon gossip, or to pay any attention to rumour or scandal—not that there is any lack of supply of all three. For my part I would not waste paper and ink in retailing such absolutely inhuman impossibilities or in putting forward evidence which cannot be tested by any of the rules known to evidence, were it not for the fact that the worst that can be said about these people and their system can be read in their own daily Press and their own official boasts and pronouncements. They calmly tell us, and it may be reckoned to their credit or their discredit as we like, that

this system of terror, horror and murder is essential to the establishment and the carrying on of the great new cause in which they are engaged. I do not, therefore, apologise for my decision to refrain from going to Russia or for the present attempt to study the question from the outside.

Finally, I can claim as a justification of my method of investigation from the outside that it is the orthodox legal method. All vital decisions in law are taken on circumstantial evidence. Circumstantial evidence, if enough of it can be secured, is considered, in criminal cases at least, to be the best. It is only quite recently in English legal practice that the defendant in a criminal charge has been allowed to say anything at all about the matter. He can now go into the box and give evidence if he elects to do so, but as a rule little importance is attached to his evidence, and no judgment is given which relies entirely upon what he says. In the same sort of way we must, I submit, study Russia from the circumstantial evidence which we can secure outside Moscow. Only so can we get near to the difficult truth.

CHAPTER II

THE APPEAL OF RUSSIA

THE word "Russia" has come in these days to mean for us a great deal more than merely the vast territories over which the Czars held sway, and signifies for us everything that is new or rebellious in thought and action all the way from Bertrand Russell to Sacco and Vanzetti. While on my recent tour of Scandinavia, Finland and the Baltic States, I chanced upon a report of Mr. Bernard Shaw's broadcast "Point of View," the concluding words of which, even with Mr. Shaw's courage, could not have been uttered in any place nearer than London to the Russian border: "Had we not better teach our children to be better citizens than ourselves? We are not doing that at present. The Russians are. That is my last word. Think over it." Mr. Shaw is one of the few happy people who can afford to say outrageous things, but even he would not have ventured on a statement like this unless he were fairly sure that the remark would find a great deal of sympathy among the millions who listened to it.

There is so much that is wrong in the world, so much trouble about, that large numbers of people are inclined, in a careless, thoughtless, easy-going sort of way, to sympathise with what they believe to be an attempt to do things better, an experiment with new ideas, an effort to found a world which may perhaps after all prove more pleasant to live in than the old. With those vague ideas in their minds they do not bother to enquire

or to study; they merely hope that good may come out of a situation which is too involved and too distant for a thorough understanding.

These Bolsheviks have given expression to much that is simmering in the hearts of many people. Indeed a considerable proportion of the population of any civilised state is usually living under a sense of grievance and has, therefore, a natural sympathy for any sort of upheaval. One has only to read the popular novels of the time to understand the wide appeal made by the Communist attack upon the marriage system. All the matrimonial mistakes of the world are good raw material for Bolshevik propaganda. The notion of complete release from Victorian sex conventions is a very happy one to many. The educated girl with the nineteenth century parent, the counterpart of the old-fashioned young lady who was "misunderstood," while she hesitates to adopt for herself full Communist liberty, is not unwilling that a great experiment, the consequences of which she is quite unable to foresee, should proceed at a convenient distance. All the social misfits, and there are necessarily many sorts of them wherever human beings congregate, are inclined to grasp at the hope which this new sort of society appears to hold out for them. And the same attitude of mind is found in many other relations of life. Even such simple human relationships as those of the mistress and the maid, the worker and the foreman, to say nothing of the scientific worker and his more prosperous colleague in the commercial department,

lead to a sense of wrong on one side. While most of these people would indignantly disown any connection with Communism, they are not unwilling that an active agitation against things as they are should proceed, nor do they fail to recognise that even though the agitation fail, it must have a salutary effect. There is one big consideration which may help us, for surely we must find very substantial reasons for the existence of a state of affairs which is unique in the known history of the world, a state of affairs in which murder and oppression have enjoyed ten years of undisturbed liberty to do their very worst, and at the end of that time still find a measure of world support, or at least toleration. The present generation is, to a large extent, robbed of the comfort the Victorians found in the theory of a better life in another world, for which a period of tribulation on this planet was a necessary preparation. They are, therefore, very tolerant of any claim, however revolutionary it may be, to be able to improve the conditions of life "here below."

The sympathy of the avowed Socialists for Moscow is easily understood, and their connection with our subject is not really so serious. It has, indeed, a humorous side, for being more skilled in the arts of political manœuvre than in the science of economics, they realise the wisdom of a nominal disavowal of the theories of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. They are busy, therefore, on the one hand expelling English Communists from the ranks of their party while introducing Russian

Communists to British official circles. The Socialist tactics are well thought out. They can introduce small quantities of Socialism by agreement and with the use of the democratic Parliamentary machine, but they know the truth of Mill's dictum :

> " The disposition of mankind, whether as rulers or as fellow-citizens, to impose their own opinions and inclinations as a rule of conduct on others, is so energetically supported by some of the best and by some of the worst feelings incident to human nature, that it is hardly ever kept under restraint by anything but want of power, and, as the power is not declining but growing, unless a strong barrier of moral conviction can be raised against the mischief, we must expect in the present circumstances of the world to see it increase."

Socialists can have, thanks very largely to the lassitude and apathy left by the war, a certain amount, but only a certain amount, of power, and consequently they welcome, although many of them dare not say so, this tremendous experiment in Russia which may, perchance, or so they hope, demonstrate the possibilities of the use of that power to achieve the Socialist ideal. But here again the thoughts and aspirations of the Socialists find support in a mass of inarticulate discontent which exists in the breasts of many people who disown Socialism. The hope that it is possible to carry on the practical work of the world without personal profit is one that makes a very wide appeal. All the unhappy and unfortunate and oppressed in industry and commerce ; the victims

of personal ineptitude, sometimes their own, sometimes their masters', are all inclined to feel that the Russian experiment, even if there be nothing in it in the end, may be worth while as a sort of purge to the evils that oppress them so sorely.

It must not be forgotten that the Russian Revolution is in logical sequence with all that has happened for many years in modern politics. Politics has become an appeal to the underdog. It used to be an appeal to the common sense and decency of responsible people on behalf of the underdog. It has now developed flagrantly and nakedly into a deliberate invitation to the worst of the characteristics of the lowest of the people. Bolshevism does this openly, boasts of it, makes a virtue of it. The other sort of politicians merely use it. But even so we have not exhausted the catalogue of the reasons which permit this Bolshevik horror to exist ; which make it possible, after ten years, for the British Empire to be helping it with full diplomatic recognition. Strange as it may appear, the anti-Socialists have, or imagine that they have, a vested interest in Bolshevism. It is so obvious to some of these people that Bolshevism must end in disaster that, by a process of Machiavellian reasoning, they are not unwilling that the system should last long enough for the disaster to be complete and unquestioned.

Lastly, one must remember that there is only a very small minority amongst us able to see and understand the economic side of things. That is a trouble which is to be found behind all political

action in the economic sphere. The man or woman who can accurately count the cost is a very rare creature. Society is running a grave risk, a risk which I, for one, believe to be well worth taking, in spreading power wholesale and evenly over a vast population whose members have yet to learn how to use it. That power includes the power over the purse. The ability to use the purse wisely is so far given only to the few. In every family and in every group it is necessary for somebody to count the cost. It is not a pleasant duty ; the life of the economically-minded is not a happy one, and I should be the last to blame those who reject it for others. I quarrel with them only when they refuse to admit its value in other people. The great majority find happiness by a literal interpretation of the Apostolic injunction : " Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow." But we have yet to discover what results may arise from the operations of this economically ignorant mentality, applied wholesale to Russia, and piecemeal to the rest of us.

There is thus an enormous mass not, of course, of opinion in favour of Bolshevism, but of acquiescence in the Bolshevik experiment, which alone can explain the immunity which recent happenings in Russia have enjoyed from criticism and opposition, criticism and opposition which in other times would have taken very vigorous and active form.

The problem of Russia is not, as some of our newspapers would have us believe, a question as

to who got the better of the discussion between Mr. Henderson and M. Dovgalevsky. There are much deeper things than that involved. Indeed, one of the many new mysteries in the matter is the way in which the methods of the underworld have been triumphantly paraded in the limelight by these people. Lenin made it quite clear that every form of discontent, however remotely related or unrelated to Bolshevism or Communism, must be fostered and encouraged and helped in the interests of world revolution. The case that we have to consider has this very extraordinary characteristic, that the most damaging and conclusive evidence is to be found in the very material which the accused themselves put forward in their defence. The over-due settlement of the world's affairs would be expedited if only Bolshevik propaganda matter were read more widely by people who claim to be educated. I quote as an illustration and as a useful introduction to our subject extracts from the manifesto issued after the Pan-Asiatic Congress of Baku in 1920, over the signatures of Radek, Bela Kun and Zinoviev. These sentences are comprehensive and typical. They require no comment. There are among my readers those who will applaud, those who will merely wonder, and others again who will suffer a sense of amazement and shame at their own indifference.

" Great Britain, having emerged the only real victor of the war, and being the omnipotent mistress of one half of the world, is now proceeding to fulfil the purposes for which

she made the war—namely, to secure for herself all the lands of Asia, and finally to subdue all the nations of the East.

" Peoples of the East, you know what England has done in India. You know that she has transformed the countless millions of Indian peasants and workers into dumb beasts of burden. The Indian peasant has to surrender to the English Government so large a part of his harvest that he can scarcely feed himself for a few months with what remains to him. Every year millions of Hindus are dying of hunger. . . . In the eyes of the English bourgeois every Hindu is a beast of burden. The corpses of his victims fill the streets of rebellious Indian villages, and those who survive have to creep on their bellies for the gratification of English officers and have to lick the boots of their oppressors.

" Peoples of the East, do you know what England has done with Turkey? In Constantinople the English have transformed all schools and universities into barracks. They have suppressed all teaching in the Turkish language. They have prohibited all Turkish newspapers. They have filled prisons with Turkish patriots.

" Peoples of the East, what has England done with Persia? English capitalists have first suppressed the rebellion of the peasants against the Shah and against the landowners, and then executed thousands and thousands of Persian peasants.

" Peoples of the East, what has England done in Palestine? In order to please Jewish–English capitalists she has deprived the Arabs of their land, to sell it to Jewish colonists, and then, in order to divert the hatred of the Arabs, she has stirred up those Arabs against the Jewish colonists whom she had herself introduced. She is thus sowing enmity and hatred amongst the different races. She thus plays off the one against the other in order that she may the more easily oppress them.

" What has England done with Egypt? She has brought Egypt under a yoke which is more cruel and more destructive than the yoke of the Egyptian Pharaohs, who, through the toil of their slaves, erected the gigantic Pyramids.

" What has England made out of China? Together with her accomplice, imperialist Japan, she has transformed this

mighty land into an English colony. She exploits a population of three hundred millions and poisons them with opium.

"What has England made out of Korea, this beautiful land with its ancient culture? She has delivered over that country to be tortured by Japanese capitalists, who now suppress the Korean people with fire and sword.

"The oppression and the ruin, the misery and the ignorance of the nations of the East are the source of the wealth of imperialistic England.

"Peoples of the East, the richest and most fruitful and most extensive lands of the world belong to you. Those lands, once the cradle of the human race, are capable not only of feeding their own population, but the population of the whole world. Yet dozens of millions of Turkish and Persian labourers and peasants cannot earn their daily bread, and are compelled to leave their native country.

"Europe is getting too small for English capital. That capital has enormously increased, and it cannot find any further outlets. The English capital, therefore, needs new lands and new workers, dumb slaves deprived of all human rights.

"Those lands the English capitalists have found in the countries of the East. Those dumb slaves they have found in the nations of the East. English capitalists desire finally to proletarise all the nations of the East, to ruin all peasants, all hand workers, all tradesmen, and drive them as hungry slaves to toil on their plantations, in their factories, and their mines.

"Such is the future which imperialistic England is preparing for the nations of the East.

"We call on you to wage a Holy War for your freedom and your life.

"England, the last powerful imperialistic bird of prey which remains in Europe, has spread her black wings over the Mahommedan countries of the East, and makes a last effort to bring the nations of the East under her claws.

"Arise, men of India, who lie prostrate from starvation and slave labour.

"Arise, peasants of Anatolia, groaning under taxation, bled white by the usurers.

" Arise, men of Arabia and Afghanistan, lost in your windy wastes and cut off by the English from the rest of the world.

" Arise against the enemy of the human race, against imperialistic England.

" Arise to fight the Holy War against the last bulwark of Capitalism of Europe, against the nest of sea-rovers and land-rovers which for centuries has been the oppressor of all the peoples of the East."

The peoples of the East after years of this class of argument are now told that England has surrendered and has accorded full diplomatic recognition to these saviours of mankind.

CHAPTER III

WORLD REVOLUTION OR WAR

THE announcement by Lenin of the New Economic Policy was rightly followed by a change of attitude on the part of other countries and most of the governments of the world proceeded to accord diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Government. They argued that only time was necessary to convert Russia to normal ways. In England, with our happy knowledge of the Socialists who leave most of their Socialism behind when they enter office, we pictured Lenin, with Trotsky to help him, retracing his steps and retracting his words in the manner which is common to our own revolutionaries. We have not yet given up that position although Stalin has destroyed its foundations. Instead of mellowing Bolshevism, ten years of power seem only to have intensified its fervour.

With the end of the New Economic Policy, it becomes needful for the rest of the nations to review the line of action which they founded on that policy, and to formulate a new attitude designed to fit in with any of the probabilities which now present themselves. Those probabilities are four in number.

First, if the Five Year Plan succeeds and six million independent peasants are crushed or become willing workers in the State machine. In that case Communism is triumphant, propaganda pledges would go by consent, and any Whites here or anywhere else would suffer

extermination or surrender. Those who are willing to contemplate this sort of probability are fully justified in supporting "recognition," treaties, credits, loans, and any other devices for weakening the old order and helping the new.

Secondly, if Bolshevism fails, in the sort of way that we anticipated ten years ago. That is to say that three years of Communism and seven years of New Economic policy under Lenin will be followed by three years of N.E.P. and a period of Communism under Stalin, then more N.E.P. under perhaps Trotsky, after that a last attempt by some new Communist leader, and then at long last a period of serious reconstruction. Those who frame for themselves a programme on these lines are surely delaying the happy ending which they visualise by any step or action which lends strength or support to Stalin.

Thirdly, if some counter revolutionary movement on a big enough scale develops and by a *coup d'état* is able to seize the reins of power from the Communist International. If that happens all the paraphernalia of diplomatic relationships will leave us in the stupid and impossible position that we occupied for some years in China. Our official connection with deposed authority will stand in the way of any help we might otherwise render to a new and normal government.

Fourthly, and this would appear to be the most natural of the probabilities we are considering, if the Bolsheviks are able to hold on to power long enough, not only to destroy every

remnant of the normal social structure, but also long enough to realise the impossibility of finding a substitute. What will happen then? Is it not certain that the power which has been strong enough to destroy Russia, will be turned upon some newly discovered foreign foe, in the vain hope that the Soviet Government may be able to lose its Communism in the waves of the patriotism it would endeavour to create?

It often, indeed generally, happens that the details, the trappings, the surface of a question will be discussed and debated while the core and substance will be forgotten and ignored. The Russian problem is no exception. Matters that are commonly talked about are of minor importance compared with the big things involved. The problem of Russia is the problem of the peace of the world, nothing more and nothing less. If Communism is right, then we are bound to "recognise" and assist it. If, on the other hand, Communism is wrong, it must fail, and by "recognition" we involve ourselves in the failure. The death struggle, when it comes, will be either a local or an international affair, the former being short, sharp, and decisive, the latter, like all wars, long, costly, and inconclusive.

Imports, exports, debts, credits, recognition, the appointment of ambassadors and delegations—all these things are by comparison incidental and trifling, notwithstanding their magnitude and importance. The settlement of Russia will carry with it the settlement of the world, and

until Russia is firmly established there can be no real peace or security for the rest. It is perfectly true that before the war Russia was the granary of the world. That great country, as a source of wheat supply, had a larger share of credit than America or Canada or the Argentine for raising the standard of living of the rest of the peoples. The development of other sources of supply has to some extent minimised the inconvenience caused by the closing of Russia, but it does not remove the debt which humanity owes to Russia in this respect. The opening of the vast expanse of Russia to the manufactures of the world is essential to that revival of trade and industry which the rest of us need so badly. All the problems and difficulties of money and credit hang to some extent upon the settlement of Russia. So long as our ledgers have to keep open a suspense account in respect of the millions involved in Russian debits and credits, the return to normality will be delayed. Still, even these great questions are details. And in considering the major issue of the peace of the world, we can also leave out of account the comfort of the Russian people themselves. In that we are merely following Lenin and his disciples. These Bolsheviks have never made the least secret of their opinions; Russia is to them a mere pawn in the game of world revolution, and they openly boast that the sacrifice of Russia would be worth while if that cause could be won. Indeed, as we shall presently see, the use of the word " Russia "

in discussing this matter at all is a loose and improper one. These people boast of their internationalism. They have no interest in some section of humanity, even so large a section as the population of Russia. They are concerned to secure what they conceive to be the well-being of the proletariat, and their motto is "Workers of the World, Unite!" But it will be agreed that in considering the nature and extent of the problem we have set ourselves, the well-being of the Russian people is a factor, and nobody, I imagine, will deny that it will remain in doubt until Bolshevism either succeeds or is ended.

But there are much bigger questions. From the Baku manifesto quoted at the end of the last chapter it is evident that so long as the present state of affairs is allowed to continue, so long will every disruptive movement in any part of the world find inspiration and support. It is useless to hope for a settled China, India, Egypt, while Moscow remains in its present hands. These places, like all the rest of the world, must adopt the Moscow method or must submit to a continuous disturbance and upheaval. The most casual study of Communist literature can leave no doubt on this score. We are so happily situated in England that it is not easy for us to understand and realise the workings of this problem elsewhere. My recent visit to Finland, Estonia and Latvia made this clear to me. It seems, for instance, a paltry and unimportant thing to us in London that a few dozen officials from Moscow should be

allowed to establish themselves here and carry on a comical, harmless and futile propaganda, under the pledge to abstain from anything of the kind. We fail to see, or perhaps we forget, that this farcical proceeding is, in itself, of as little importance to Moscow as it is to us. The arrival of Sir Esmond Ovey in Moscow and M. Sokolnikov in London are merely the raising of the curtain and the turning on of the footlights in a performance of far greater importance. The rebels and the revolutionaries in ten thousand Indian bazaars are at this moment explaining to such as care to hear them that the British Empire has accepted the blessed doctrine of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and that there is at last some hope for the Workers of the World. Every little Soviet cell from end to end of Russia is at the same time explaining to the starving population that the long promised victory is at hand, and that England has surrendered. This sort of thing is happening everywhere, except of course in England, and its importance can only be understood by those who appreciate what the name of England means to the rest of the world. The downtrodden and the oppressed of all races, people to whom England is something like a distant planet, have for centuries associated the name with liberty, peace, happiness, and progress. We have given to the world all sorts of trouble, all sorts of mistakes, many things which are anything but blessings, but it is beyond denial that we are recognised everywhere as the

judges of all that is good in government and as the most experienced and successful of all peoples in the art of arranging the affairs of society. The recognition of Moscow by the English Government is therefore a matter of supreme importance to the world propaganda of the Bolsheviks. America has not yet been long enough in the public eye to be recognised as a safer guide in public affairs than England, although our position in these matters, if we have much more to do with Russia, is likely to become a secondary one. But the fact that America has consistently declined to have anything to do with Moscow is now not merely discounted but pushed right into the background by the triumphant re-entry of the Soviet Ambassador to the Court of St. James's.

That, however, is by no means the end of the story. My case is that by continuing to dally with Bolshevism we are heading straight towards war—and here is an issue which is surely worth the consideration of many people who would seem to-day deliberately to ignore it. I can understand the sincere theoretical Communist, who believes that the principles of Communism are good and sound, talking of the end of the Bolshevik experiment as peace. But all the rest of us, from the Socialists who doubt or deny Communism, right away to the economists who know it to be the maddest form of economic destruction, have no excuse for shirking this major issue. The end of our present attitude towards Moscow must

be war. All the interest and enthusiasm behind the League of Nations ; all the study which that wonderful institution has provoked, would be well advised and better directed if it would give more attention to this grave risk. The world is confronted with the serious possibility of the outbreak of war from two quarters only—Italy and Russia. Both of these countries are engaged in original and dangerous experiments in the methods of government. At any time either of these experiments may fail, and when that failure becomes imminent, the national leaders will adopt the only course which remains open to a governmental system in an impossible position. Speaking at the tenth anniversary banquet of the League of Nations Union, at the Guildhall, London, General Smuts put his finger on the spot :

" There is no doubt " (he said) " that war has in the past sometimes served as a solvent for intolerable situations." The risk of war from Italy is perhaps not so great as the risk of war from Russia. For whatever can be said against the Italian experiment, it is not starving the Italian people, and men with full bellies do not readily enlist. But the case in Russia is entirely different.

It must not be forgotten that the Great War gave Bolshevism its chance, and that the subsequent internal war doubled its strength. Indeed it is open to question whether the busts of Lenin now spread all over Russia ought not in justice to be replaced by those of Mr. Lloyd George or Mr. Winston Churchill. Lenin and his confederates

could never have remained firmly in control of the Government of Russia had they not been supported at the start by that patriotism which was provoked as the natural answer to the aid which we gave to their opponents. Our intervention in Russia was the best thing that ever happened to the Bolsheviks, it brought the force of natural Russian nationalism to their aid, and the time is not far distant when they will again require the same sort of support.

If, as it is my object to show, and as most people profess to believe, Bolshevism as an economic system is unworkable and absurd ; if the plight of the Russian people is to go from bad to worse ; if the condition of living in Russia is to become, as I believe it must become, more and more difficult, then Stalin and his associates will have to find a way out. They cannot for ever have a different economic policy each month. They cannot survive the continued exposure of the folly of their ideas, and the easy way out, the way which all history teaches they will take, is to provoke a conflict with some foreign power. Such a conflict would provide the best and simplest excuse for the alteration of all their methods and the recantation of all their ideas. " My country—right or wrong," is still the most powerful known influence in the whole of public affairs, and the Bolsheviks, notwithstanding their vaunted anti-nationalism, may have, once again, to use it for their support.

Stripped of every minor detail and side issue,

the situation is a very simple one. Here is a body of persons holding a set of unusual ideas, determined at all costs to enforce those ideas, ruthlessly using the prison cell and the gun as the chief instruments for their purpose, and frankly declaring that the people of Russia are merely the material on which they are working for the ultimate development of a larger design. Determined and desperate to a degree, could anything be more likely, more natural, indeed more certain, than that as a last resort they will turn to war?

A trip through countries which are more nearly placed to Russia brings this conception home. Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Poland, are all armed to the teeth in preparation for Russia. I failed to find in any of these countries the faintest suggestion of a plan for attacking Russia, but then, no militarist policy anywhere or at any time ever admitted a desire to attack. These infernal machines are always created for defence. The armies of these countries form part of the excuse for the armies of other countries, and so the military menace is kept in being. I leave out of account the Red Army itself. My information of it varies. I have talked to military authorities who scoffed, but the majority treat it with respect. There is, however, one comment that can be made. The existence and efficiency of the Red Army is a standing denial of the truth of the Communist principle. The Bolsheviks owe their power and position to Soldiers' and Workmen's Councils, which first demoralised and then superseded the

armies of the Czar. They now depend increasingly for the security of their position upon the iron discipline which they are reported to have developed in an army from which all idea of Soldiers' and Workmen's Councils has, in fact if not in name, been removed.

In any attempt to understand the Russian problem, the student should in justice think out this fundamental aspect of it. From *The A B C of Communism*, published in England eight years ago, right down to the last issue of any of the numerous official Russian newspapers, it has been declared over and over again that Communism cannot exist side by side with the capitalist system. These people never waver in the boldness of their declaration of war on everything else. They must succeed or go under. There is no middle course. I am one of those who believe that, firstly, success is impossible, and secondly, that they will go under by themselves if left to themselves. The present half-hearted compromise involves the rest of us in either their success or their failure. Seeing that most of us desire to be associated with neither calamity, my submission is that we should recognise the wisdom of America and stand aside. Unless we can contemplate the success of Communism with equanimity, we are involving ourselves in its destruction and imposing upon ourselves the necessity of completing that destruction through the process of war. No other end to the present course can be conceived by anyone who will take the trouble to spend a

few weeks in conversation and consultation with those who have close personal experience of Russian matters. I should be the very last to suggest that Great Britain should take its policy from the distraught and unhappy peoples who find themselves right up against the menace of Bolshevism on the Russian border, but a few weeks spent among these people are useful in helping to dispel that apathy and indifference, that callous mental laziness, that are at the moment robbing us English of our sense of responsibility in this matter and leaving the world wondering what has happened to that England which for centuries has been regarded as the guardian of human liberty.

CHAPTER IV

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

THE case for avoiding a visit to Russia in present circumstances becomes stronger the more one examines it. Intimate personal acquaintance is not always of value when judging the qualities or character of a person or a situation. In the historical field there are those who hold that material which is less than a century old is not fit for history, and reliable biography is generally written only by a later generation. All these things gain a certain value from distance. They acquire perspective, and the rule applies generally. The value of the cinema is better assessed by a study of its achievements in London or Calcutta than by all the information to be secured at Hollywood.

Again in appointing a man to any position you note in passing what he has to say about his own qualities, but you listen intently to what others say about him. There are more important things than those that ordinarily pass for facts. When, for instance, a man reeks of whisky, the fact that the last train left two minutes earlier than he expected is of no importance to you. If you are wise, you turn down a business proposition, however good the figures appear to be, if the proposer avoids your eyes with his when expounding it to you. In fact, wherever one looks the wisdom of studying a person or question a little apart from itself does become evident. Whether you assess the Bolsheviks by what others say or

by what they themselves say, you are driven to the same conclusions, for there is no more damning evidence of the futility and absurdity of these people than is to be found in their own pronouncements about themselves. These pronouncements, as might be expected, are both contradictory and mutually destructive. The study of the Bolshevik Press or of their conversations and confessions discloses a greater volume of hunger, poverty, need and distress than has ever formed the subject of official confession here or elsewhere at any other time. When all this is put side by side with the specially prepared stories for the benefit of the proletariat, the term "duplicity" seems weak and inadequate to express the attitude of these people. There is a good deal more than duplicity, there is ample official evidence that the propaganda to the proletariat is definite, simple, straightforward lying. To the unfortunate Russians themselves, their rulers explain day by day, in print and through the microphone, the glorious successes of the Revolution in the rest of the world. As we have already seen, Russia is cheered and delighted with the absurd idea that the British Empire, through recognition, has accepted the domination of the Communists. The same methods and means are adopted in explaining to the proletariat of the rest of the world how perfect is the life of the workers inside the closed frontiers of Russia. Day by day the microphone is treated to a dose of propagandist matter, repeated in five or six languages, for the benefit of the workers in

the outside world. Touring through the neighbouring countries it is interesting to notice the effect of this broadcast propaganda. Near the Russian border, where knowledge and information are plentiful and personal, it is treated with contempt and ridicule. Further away, as in Norway, for instance, it helps to maintain an active and dangerous Communist Party.

The worthlessness of Communist propaganda is admirably illustrated by a pamphlet just issued by the Communist Party of Great Britain entitled *Russia's Socialist Triumph : The Exposition of the Soviet Five Year Plan of Socialist Construction*. Here the author has the impertinence—or the courage—to add to falsehood about the present state of affairs a wonderful picture of the future. Nowhere outside the realm of politics would such audacity be thinkable. For ten years past Moscow has issued figures explaining what would be the results of Communist organisation in the following year. These clever propagandists have filled up the Press of the world with Russian statistics seldom concerned with anything that has happened but always optimistic about what is going to happen. For ten years every one of these figures has been falsified. Their authors have not retained a shred of reputation with any student of statistics, and yet so confidently can they rely upon the determination of the public to ignore realities that they are now able to produce a Five Year Plan, extending into the more distant future estimates

which have no foundation on the past and no prospect of more than partial realisation. " There are many remarkable achievements of Soviet Russia," says *Russia's Socialist Triumph*, " which even the capitalists are forced to acknowledge. But none of these is more wonderful than the way in which the Russian workers have rebuilt production and economic life generally, up to and beyond the pre-war level. . . . " Relying implicitly upon the acceptance by the reader of this outrageous claim, the pamphlet then proceeds to enlarge upon the Five Year Plan. This precious plan, it appears, far from being the work of some intelligent bureaucratic dictator imposed upon the proletariat from the central authority, is, on the contrary, the accumulation of much proletarian research, for

" There was no factory or agricultural district, no pit or railway depôt, no Communist Party group or trade union branch, in which the plan was not subjected to the most searching criticism and discussion, both as a whole and in the part directly relating to the workers in question."

Four pages later, after much more information about this happy outcome of discussion by every railway depôt and trade union branch, we learn that

" the costs of production are to be lowered by 35 per cent."

Having regard to our own difficulties when forming plans for groups or parties, as when we

try to enunciate a Liberal Agricultural Policy, a Conservative Tariff Programme, agree upon a Prayer Book or decide what to do with Charing Cross Bridge, the Communist claim to unanimity and perfection after discussion by every group and union in their vast domain would seem to require more support.

Those who have experience of the discussion of commercial and industrial plans by groups or parties or unions or associations, especially when it comes to "the part directly relating to the workers in question," will venture to doubt the efficacy of this particular means of lowering costs by 35 per cent.

Space does not permit the complete analysis of this outrageous document. It can, however, be purchased from the Communist Party of Great Britain, 16, King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2, for *2d.*, by anyone who is sufficiently interested to examine the matter in greater detail. The strength of the pamphlet lies, as is the case with most of this sort of literature, in the ability of its authors to use long words and big figures without respect to what they mean, coupled with a firm reliance upon the lack of reasoning powers in those who read. Here is another typical paragraph into which nobody but a Bolshevik can possibly read any sensible meaning:

"Even more decisive will be the growth of the Socialist and collectivist element in agriculture. The organising of 20,000,000 people in the collective farms mentioned previously will itself be responsible for one tremendous achievement in

this respect. It will stabilise the individual section of agriculture, i.e., the natural increase of the State and collective farms will be sufficient after 1932–33 to absorb the growth of population in the small peasant farms."

This utterance, it must be admitted, is very little worse than a great many which are to be found in our own political literature. It means just as much as other sentences which abound, say, in the pamphlet *Labour and the Nation*, and it may be that some of us are inclined to take this sort of thing a little too seriously. We are apt to forget that these politicians must say something, but that what they say is, at times at least, of very minor importance to them or to us. The driving power behind the worst sort of government is the urge in the breasts of the lower class of politicians for power, for jobs, for position, and it is necessary, in order to attain them, whether wanted by a Stalin or a Ramsay MacDonald or an Amanullah, to say a great many things which will for the moment keep the people at one's back. The Bolsheviks only differ from other sorts of politicians in that they are aiming at two different sets of people, one inside and one outside the Russian border. They require, therefore, to be doubly proficient in the misrepresentative arts.

The case for the recognition of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics by Britain is at its best only the age-old story of the good, pure girl who marries the degenerate man in the hope that she may reform him. That hope seldom fails to disappoint, but in justice it must be admitted that

here at least is a worthy object. Many people without a shred of sympathy for Communism or for the present Government of Russia hold firmly to the notion that through recognition it may be possible to get into closer touch with the Russian people and bring about a slow recovery from the present disastrous position. The complete refutation of this suggestion is surely to be found in the anxiety of the Bolsheviks themselves for recognition. Any good that may come out of the minor opportunities for contact with the Russian people through diplomatic connections is balanced a thousand times by the prestige, the influence and encouragement given to Communists in every part of the world, especially in China and India, by this unfortunate step. It should be remembered that the problem is only partly concerned with the government of Russia, and chiefly concerned with the class war in every country and corner of the world.

But to continue our task of looking at Communism from a distance. If this thing is a glorious ideal ; if, as indeed is represented in some quarters, it can be compared to a religion ; if it represents the desire of high-minded persons to introduce a better life to the afflicted human being, why should it be necessary to support it with wholesale murder ? A certain amount of bloodshed we know from experience to be inevitable at the commencement of any great political upheaval. The establishment of the French Republic, the United States, and the Irish Free State all involved a little shooting here

and there. We have not hitherto been in the habit of regarding the horrors of revolution in France as "little," but after the last ten years of experience with Russia they fall into insignificance. The answer to this conundrum is conveniently given by the Communist pamphlet to which we have referred. I attach the merest minimum of importance to an official Russian figure, but one can have complete confidence in the thought that when the figure is an estimate of future achievement, there is at least no fear of understatement. The following quotation gives the key to the position :

> "The total numbers of the proletariat rise from 11,350,000 in 1927–28 to 15,724,000 in 1932–33, and its relative size from 14 per cent. of the total population to 17 per cent."

Note in passing that the total numbers of the proletariat are not "estimated at," "calculated to be," "computed," or "given as," they simply "rise." No authority is given for the figures nor are we told how they are calculated. We are not even vouchsafed a definition of the proletariat to which they refer—but then, they are Bolshevik figures, and it is a Bolshevik statement. The interest lies, as usual, between the lines. We are faced with the dictatorship of the proletariat; we are led to suppose that the proletariat is in the majority among mankind ; we are asked to accept the revolution to rid the world of parasites. And then we rub our eyes and discover that in Russia, the paradise where these glorious ideas bring joy to the hearts of the people, 11,000,000 out of 140,000,000

are alone concerned in the matter, and that in five years time, by some process not explained, 15,724,000 people will share the delights of the Five Year Plan at the expense of over 120,000,000 other people living side by side with them. I should mention for the sake of accuracy, that the population figures I have used are pure guess-work. A population of 180,000,000 was the accepted figure when reliable information was available. We now hear of 150,000,000, the Baltic States having been deducted, but no definite statistics are to be had as to the actual present population of Russia. Various forces are at work reducing it. Starvation, famine, and despair probably do even more than the Communist shooting squads. On the other hand, the official blessing given to a callous disregard of marriage as a system has, we know, given to Russia a large accession of unwanted children. But this significant admission that even in five years' time all this bother is to be in the interests of 15,724,000 persons explains without further comment the necessity for the gun and the murder as agents in its maintenance. It does not need a visit to Russia to know that most of the things, if not all, that Communism has so far done, have resulted in disaster, disaster which is again to be found in the naïve admissions of the Bolsheviks themselves.

The most curious thing about the political game is that it is the only game where the players can rely upon kudos out of failure. The study of Bolshevik failure can be conducted over a wide range

of subjects, at the one end so complicated a question as credit and currency ; at the other so simple a matter as keeping a chicken and the output of eggs. The Russians have in recent years succeeded in marketing a great deal of oil in this country and elsewhere, and in connection with oil, as with other commodities, have caused a great deal of inconvenience to more orthodox rivals. The whole history of commerce contains no more astounding pronouncement than the official justification issued by Moscow for the sale of oil at less than cost in the London market. Here are the exact words :

" It [the Soviet Oil Trust] has the power to cut sale prices below the production cost if it seems desirable. This is possible for two reasons. The Oil Trust is a State monopoly whose losses the State can cover as it wishes. The oil is sold abroad for foreign value, as against which the Soviet bank of emission can issue three times its nominal worth in gold roubles. As oil-production costs within the Soviet Union are paid in roubles, a unit of oil products which costs 100 roubles may be sold abroad for 50 roubles in American valuation, which can be used as cover for a new Soviet emission of 150 roubles, thus transforming the loss into a 50 per cent. profit."

This high-sounding paragraph can, like other Communist propaganda material, be launched upon the world in the certain knowledge that the ignorant will accept it as wisdom. It is even conceivable that a man like Stalin, carefully protected as he has been for years from all knowledge of practical affairs, may have worked his mind into a condition which makes it capable of imagining sense in rubbish such as this.

Examine exactly what it means. The Russian Government somehow or another induces the Russian producer to deliver a cask of oil. It gives to that producer in exchange a piece of paper on which is printed the legend, say, " 20 roubles." The cask of oil is then sent to London and handed over to an omnibus company in exchange for a piece of paper on which is printed the legend " One Pound." This piece of paper is then taken back to Moscow, paid into the State bank, and under its own banking rules that institution is permitted to print a number of other pieces of paper on which the legend " 30 roubles " appears. Therefore, says the Communist economist, we have in Moscow 30 roubles in exchange for the 20 roubles which we previously possessed. In fact, Russia is the poorer by a cask of oil, but one of its pieces of paper has the figure 30 instead of 20 printed upon its surface. Banking and currency are complicated and difficult questions, but the genius of the Bolshevik reduces them to proportions so simple that the merest novice can comprehend and understand.

If, however, as may well be the case, the mind of the average person refuses to function when confronted with questions of currency and credit, the case of the humble chicken is better suited for popular discussion. The Bolsheviks set great store upon the education of the young, and the Communist counterpart of the boy scout movement is an important factor in the party organisation. The good turn to some other individual which is part of the daily programme of the normal scout becomes

in Russia the daily good turn to the party or the State. An enormous system of propaganda by poster is therefore arranged, to explain to the boy scouts of Russia how they are to be a means of increasing the output of eggs and chickens. Thus we are told, first, that there is enormous waste arising from the habit in hens of laying eggs in unauthorised places. The Young Communists are, therefore, to see that every owner of a hen has a properly prepared nest in which the egg is to be laid. No mention is made of any possible annoyance on the part of the peasant over the inspection of his hen-coop by the juvenile Communist. The boys are then to watch the hens and train them to the use of the authorised nest. But this, if an onerous and time-wasting task, is a minor part of the great national work involved. The experts in the agricultural department at Moscow have not been unmindful of the necessity for improving the breeds of poultry, and the young Communists are, therefore, to keep a record of the laying capacities of each hen. As soon as they discover a bird laying at the rate of more than 100 eggs per annum, that bird is to be commandeered by the boy scout in the name of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and shipped at once to a State farm so that it may there consort with other birds of similar quality. Thus, or so it is claimed, will the egg and poultry production of Russia be multiplied indefinitely, and the propagandist department, by big posters, informs the illiterate peasantry of the way in which every extra hen means another

contribution towards the tractor which must be imported, was promised ten years ago, has not yet arrived, but which, with the aid of the Young Communists and the Five Year Egg Plan, is now quite sure to mature.

Even more ridiculous perhaps is the story of the way in which this absurd agency is to be used for the encouragement of rabbit breeding. Here again, with characteristic disregard of humour, the poster brings the dreaded rabbit and the much-coveted tractor into relation for the edification of the simple Russian peasant. If the enemies of the Bolsheviks desire to bring them and their system into ridicule, they could do no better than to invent such stories as these. But the enemies are relieved of all trouble in the matter by the frank disclosure of every stupid detail in its official sheets by Moscow itself.

In claiming that everything the Bolsheviks have done has ended in disaster, we have at one end of the catalogue the economic ruin due to amateur fooling with oil and currency, and the social disintegration (for no economic considerations can arise) due to the legalising of boyish propensities for orchard robbing and chicken stealing. In between the two extremes may be mentioned the easier case, about which surely no doubt can remain, of the turning of the granary of Europe into a wheat importing country. The first effects of the class war, out of which the proletariat hopes to secure so much, are not only to reduce the Russians to starvation but to enhance the price of wheat and bread to every proletarian the world over.

It does not matter in what direction one looks for proof of the failure of Communism. The proof is always there, and in such variety as surely to be conclusive to every student from whatever point of view he approaches the matter. In 1919 there was issued an official work called *The ABC of Communism*, and this was translated into English, at a time when funds were more available than they are to-day, by Eden and Cedar Paul. This document is, therefore, perhaps the best of all Communist propaganda matter. In the hands of this distinguished literary couple the English is of a quality quite uncommon in the literature of Communism. Here we find that in March, 1918, the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party issued a manifesto. It is a long document, of some thirty pages, but every line in it still remains to be justified. I take as an illustration the following simple statement about labour protection and social welfare work :

" The establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat made possible for the first time the full realisation of the minimum programme of the socialist parties in the domain of labour protection. In its Code of Labour Laws, the Soviet Power has formally decreed : an eight-hour working day for all workers as the maximum working time—but for persons not exceeding eighteen years of age, and also in especially injurious branches of production, and also for miners, the working day must not exceed six hours ; a forty-two-hour period each week of uninterrupted rest for all workers ; overtime is as a rule prohibited ; the employment of the labour of children and of young persons under sixteen is prohibited ; night work, and work in injurious trades and also overtime, are prohibited in the case of all women and also in the case

of young men under the age of eighteen ; for eight weeks before and eight weeks after childbirth women do no work, but continue to receive full pay, together with gratuitous medical attendance and medicine, and working women with children at the breast receive during working hours half-an-hour's leave every three hours ; the inspection of labour and sanitary inspection by soviets elected by the trade unions.

" For all workers who do not exploit others' labour the legislation of the Soviet Power provides full social insurance against any kind of loss of capacity for labour, and also (for the first time in history) against unemployment at the sole expense of employers and the State, with complete independence on the part of the insured, together with the intimate participation of the trade unions."

That was the position in 1919. In 1929, when we are asked to contemplate Russia's Socialist triumph in the official pamphlet of the Communist Party, we are informed that " by the end of 1930 the total number working the shorter day will be one million." In 1919 the " establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat *made* possible for the first time the full realisation of the minimum programme of the socialist parties in the domain of labour protection." In 1929 we are told rather more modestly that by the end of 1930 the total number working the shorter day *will* be one million.

This complete and significant admission of failure is covered up as only the Bolsheviks know how in tempting paragraphs such as this :

" The productivity of labour, thanks particularly to the great development of mechanical energy of all kinds, will increase by 110 per cent., and the costs of production will decrease by 35 per cent., under the Plan. *But this will not prevent a further increase in real wages.* As already noted, real

wages in 1927–28 were already 22.5 per cent. above the pre-war level. The Plan provides for a further average increase in wages during the five years of 69 per cent., ranging from 27 per cent. and 29 per cent. in the case of food-workers and printers to 60 per cent. and 54 per cent. in the case of miners and metal workers, and rising even to 70 per cent. in the case of teachers, who in the first years of reconstruction had to take second place to the industrial workers." (*Russia's Socialist Triumph.*)

To be serious, to treat these people with respect, to discuss them or their arguments as though they really mattered, puts a very great strain upon all who have any knowledge or understanding of the matters under discussion. How, for instance, can we argue about the first two sentences of the above quotation? Production will increase by 110 per cent., costs of production will decrease by 35 per cent. Those are the premises, and then italics are used to emphasise the monumental truth discovered apparently in Moscow and in Moscow alone: " . . . this will not prevent a further increase in real wages."

If it were again possible, as it has often been possible in the past in industrial countries properly managed by industrial methods properly understood, to increase production by 110 per cent., costs of production would decrease certainly by 35 per cent., probably by a great deal more, and no power on earth has ever been able or would be able to prevent a doubling or trebling of real wages.

It is not necessary to go to Russia to know and understand all there is to be known and understood about the question of credit. We do not need

deputations of manufacturers to visit Moscow and interview Rykov in order to know that the Russians, just like everyone else, would be very glad indeed to be able to acquire property without the troublesome obligation of offering value in return. A great deal of nonsense is talked about credit, not only in relation to Russia but credit generally. The phrase " to give credit " lends itself to misunderstanding. It is in the very nature of credit that it cannot be given. It is something which is acquired, and yet the phrase has grown up in common conversation and we " give " credit. The tradesman who delivers groceries to the housewife and collects the account at the end of the month talks about giving credit. It is unnecessary to point out that he does nothing of the kind, the housewife being of a character and reputation which enable the tradesman to feel confidence, to carry on his business in a convenient way and once a month collect the money that is due to him. So it is with all credit. The giving of credit, as the phrase goes, in business is nothing more than a recognition of the fact that the other man is a creditable person and has credit which can be used. There are, of course, border line cases where some tradesman will part with his goods in the hope and belief that the buyer will have the means to pay for them when the date of settlement arrives, but no tradesman, under any circumstances, can ever be persuaded to part with goods when he knows as a certainty that the buyer is without means or without the prospect of acquiring means. The words

" to give credit " constitute a loose expression which does not convey to the average mind the information which it ought to imply. We might as well talk of " giving music " or " giving history " as of " giving credit." If the English Goverment were to decide that it would be a wise and proper thing from a political or social or humanitarian point of view to pay out of the taxpayers' money a number of English manufacturers in consideration of their delivering goods to Russia for which Russia cannot pay, that is another matter, a matter which might well be argued and discussed. But it is important in considering any such suggestion that the people who make it, those who carry it out and the electors who approve it should thoroughly understand what it is that they are doing. It is unfortunately the fact that most of the electors who vote for credit to Russia imagine in their innocence that the Government has only to use the word in order to make trade flourish. No more dangerous misapprehension was ever entertained.

In connection with this matter of credit a very useful suggestion is to be found in a little book by Dr. Eduard Luboff, *Can We Trade with Russia?* Dr. Luboff shows that the Russian Government in the last few years has possessed very considerable credits in the London money market, certainly £150,000,000 sterling. This money has, and no doubt exists on the matter for a moment, been used either for Bolshevik propaganda here or elsewhere, or else for the purchase of manufactured articles other than in Great Britain, or, probably,

for both purposes. Dr. Luboff says that it would be wise to establish in London a Government office and give to it the monopoly of trade with Russia. That indeed would appear to be a delicate compliment to the Bolsheviks themselves. They have in Moscow an office which enjoys the exclusive privilege on behalf of Russia of doing trade with us; would it not therefore be a convenient and polite arrangement to have in London a Government office which was endowed with similar powers and privileges? The Russians, however, might not be quite so happy about Dr. Luboff's second suggestion. He says that these two offices could arrange to trade on level terms. When, as we have been in the habit of doing, we buy £20,000,000 worth of Russian oil, timber, or other products, the Government office in London could say to the Government in Moscow, "We will send you £20,000,000 worth of English products in exchange, and we enclose our catalogue, from which you can make your selection." The Bolsheviks deny the trading system of the world, and they would therefore have no grievance if their unscrupulous use of it in London were rendered impossible. The Russian people, certainly, would be far happier if they knew that in exporting timber to England there was an absolute certainty of England sending back to them machinery or clothes or other commodities of which they stand in such dire need. Dr. Luboff's suggestion is open, I need hardly say, to the gravest objections from other points of view. The extension of Government trading which it would

involve can in the end be neither good for Russia nor for us, but it would at least bring an end to the absurdity of the present position. The Bolsheviks would no longer be able to extort produce at the point of the pistol from the miserable Russian, sell it in London, and use the proceeds for their own purposes in any part of the world. Such trade as was done would at least be reciprocal and would thus properly be described as trade, primitive in character though it might be.

A theoretical study of the practice of Bolshevism as applied to economic matters should include a note of the fact that every business experiment which these people have conducted with foreigners has up to date been a ghastly failure. Concessions to foreign firms and institutions have from time to time been made, and none of them has lasted. Firm after firm has made an effort to carry on business as arranged by the authorities in Moscow, and every such experiment has ended in disaster. English, Germans, Americans, Czechs—all have tried and all have failed. The reason is not far to seek for those who understand the character and nature of commerce and industry. The first essential in these matters is what may be described as continuity. It is often impossible and always difficult to run a business for a few weeks or months or years. Indeed, an examination of most industrial undertakings in this or any other country shows that they carry on through long periods of trial and triumph, depression and success, almost always making a comparatively small living to go

along with, always entertaining greater hopes for the future and, when successful, always building up a property for posterity. It is the hope of the future which keeps most of our shops and factories in existence. The Bolsheviks, however, deliberately and openly deny or remove that hope. We know from our own experience how powerful is the fear of taxation as a business-destroyer. The unsatisfactory state of our commercial affairs is more due to the unwillingness to shoulder public financial responsibilities than to any other single cause. If, however, we here or a people anywhere, boast of the certainty of confiscation, no business can exist. The Bolsheviks regard commerce as a disease, and they have invented this perfect and certain prophylactic against that disease.

In reading this catalogue of failure and farce, the meticulous critic will be entitled to ask, "But what about the successes?" It is beyond dispute that the Russians have established a few factories; have built a few houses; have set up a number of schools; and it is also not to be denied that they run the theatre and the opera with a moderate amount of success. When we come presently to consider some of the evidence culled in the Baltic States we shall be in a better position to appreciate the true value of these things, but here we are only concerned to get our perspective right, to get the problem and its details into their correct dimensions. Given the largest country in Europe; given 140 millions of people; given a number of highly-civilised towns, and a

well-established, if limited, industrial equipment ; given, in addition, the whole of the wealth of the old Russian Empire, so far as wealth can be collected and mobilised in revolutionary circumstances ; no government, however bad, could fail to do something. The marvel of the few hundreds of working-class dwellings which have been built is not their quality nor their appearance, but the fact that all the force of government in such unique circumstances, unfettered in any way, full and free and powerful as no government authority has ever been before, should have been able in ten years to produce only so few. To the practical mind what has been done is in no sense a success, bears no relation to the idea of achievement, but is the most damning evidence of the impossibility and the failure of both the system and its application. With regard to the factories, we shall presently hear, again from the evidence of the Baltic States, that many of these are mere show places, got together with special exhibition staffs, with the deliberate intention of deceiving the foreign visitor. A story like this is easier to believe when we know, on evidence that we ourselves are able to supply, that these factories and the mythical " others " are unable to function, in so far as they rely upon leather belting, until the Government of Great Britain, through the processes of recognition, has satisfied the whole of the conditions upon which the central trading authority of Russia will buy the necessary belting to enable the factories to carry on their work.

As to the theatre, the opera and the ballet, so far from constituting evidences of success, they help us with our story of failure. People who have never been to Russia before are impressed with the skill and the novelty of the Russian stage, but no one who knew Russia before the Revolution has ever failed to deplore the present state of these institutions. Russia was the home of the arts of the theatre. Every little village from the Middle Ages has centred round its troupe of players. St. Petersburg and Moscow in the days of the Czar led the world in the practice of stagecraft, and the best that can be said for the Bolshevik régime is that it has not quite destroyed these ancient Russian traditions.

It is easy to understand the animosity of the business classes of the whole world towards the operations of the Russian authorities, but it is not so easy to understand the apathy of the political interests. It would seem as if politicians of all parties have as much to lose by the success of the Bolsheviks as anyone, for never before has the political game been played so low or been exposed to such complete ridicule. The Bolsheviks say quite openly that if people are to be found who are so foolish as to accept their signature, why should they be blamed for giving it? It is beyond dispute that the Third International exists for propaganda purposes and for nothing else. Its one and only object is to bring about what is known as the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, to promote Class War and to achieve World Revolution. It is not

disputed that no man can hold office in the Russian Government without the approval of the Communist International. Examination of the lists discloses the fact that the personnel of the International and the Russian Government is much the same. And yet these people come to London, to Paris or to Berlin, and ask deliberately and without a smile that they should be recognised in official hours as genuine diplomats carrying on diplomatic work according to the rules ; and that they should be allowed, outside office hours, to divest themselves of their official robes, appear as members of the Communist Party, and abuse and denounce the governments and the systems with which they are in contact in their official capacities. Nothing more gloriously cynical, nothing more impossible, nothing more outrageous, has ever been experienced in the history of human relationships, and if this sort of thing is to be accepted and allowed as part of the normal processes of politics and government, the end is in sight and the suicide of all politicians and political parties and governments is assured.

CHAPTER V

THE MORAL SIDE

Love, marriage, sex, and religion are not subjects which the writer on commerce and economics ordinarily regards as within his proper province. They are the stock-in-trade of the novelist, the poet, and the literary craftsman. When, if ever, literature feels the need of a change from love, and men of letters turn to business for their themes, the economic condition of the world will improve. Meanwhile it is the tragic fate of the commonwealth, and this seems to be true of all ages, that literary ability and economic sense seldom mate, indeed, they appear to be perpetually separated by a sort of reciprocity of suspicion. Adequately to treat of love or religion, the writer must possess great skill in the use and arrangement of words, be a master of the arts of innuendo, and be able to wind artfully into the mind of his reader situations which would lose their value and attraction if explained in common language. But the Russian Revolution is in fact much more concerned with these things than with capitalism and economics, and to study the by-products without considering the main subject is to give up the task of trying to understand Russia or Bolshevism. We hear of Communism mostly as a matter of economics only because the Moscow propagandists regard economics as the best line to offer in the English market. Just as the German is the fool, so is the Bolshevik the prince, of propaganda; wisdom and propagandist ability are seldom found in partnership.

Germany's supreme ability to advance the economic well-being of mankind is to a large extent crippled by her failure as a psychologist. Russia's determination to destroy civilisation is, on the other hand, supported by unequalled mastery of the lowest aspects of the human mind and soul.

Thus it comes about, there being in England a great deal of uneasiness and suspicion on economic questions, that Moscow specialises on economics in its propaganda amongst us. At present the prospects of progress would be small here with an anti-God or anti-family campaign, and yet those things are far more evident and important in Moscow than such social questions as we like to discuss. Material well-being is after all largely a matter of custom and comparison. If nobody has any clothes, nobody wants them, and it is easy to understand that social position and importance among our fellows may depend as easily upon the degree of raggedness in rags as upon the quality of silk or linen. The science of economics is concerned with comfort and it is not possible to be comfortable in circumstances which fail to meet with at least a degree of approval from our friends and neighbours. When, therefore, nine-tenths of a nation consist of slum dwellers there is nothing very difficult or even interesting about a movement to force everybody to the slum level, neither does it make a great deal of difference, which helps to explain how revolutionary Russia has been able to exist on starvation for thirteen years. Poverty and distress is to the Russian a natural,

not a revolutionary, state of affairs, and the real revolt is against the family, the accepted ideas of sexual relations, and religion.

The religion of the illiterate Russian is of a primitive, superstitious type, well adapted for the purposes of revolution. The attack is, therefore, not a very difficult one to make, especially when the mortal counterparts of their ancient superstitions have been made to perish so unexpectedly and so easily. But religion in England is no longer so completely dependent upon the old dogmas as it is in more backward Russia, and an anti-religious campaign in England is to that extent a less promising undertaking than is to be found in the realm of Socialism or Communism. So for English purposes Bolshevism is a matter of property and the Socialism of it is put in the front, while in Russia the Soialism follows on the anti-God idea. In both places and to some extent the two things go together, but very few people except the leaders of the Communist International fully understand how closely linked are the two ideas. Property and family have grown up together, and religion has kept both of them under restraint and regulation.

The Bolshevik Revolution is an attempt to take the bottom of society and place it on top, a process which is impossible without the destruction of all that enables the present top to hold its position. If in the old régime any particular line of conduct is counted as a virtue, such conduct must be denounced, while by the same reasoning

a crime to the rest of us may well be a virtue to the revolutionary.

" Religion, morality, family, nationalism, social justice, all these," says a sympathetic writer, " as understood in the outside world, mean little, if anything, furnish neither inspiration nor guidance. The standards, traditions, sublimations, exaltations, that have clustered about them, the Russian youth has cast aside almost like so much cluttering garbage." (*Humanity Uprooted*, Hindus, p. 210.)

The first attack is made with great skill upon the restraints and limitations imposed by religious teaching, and thus the support, not only of all the libertines, but of many others who suffer, or think they suffer, by reason of these restrictions is secured from the start.

There may be a few weird perverts amongst our modernists to whom the following argument will make an appeal, but they must be very few. Others will regard it, as it really is, as a deliberate appeal to the lowest instincts.

" Love as a separate emotion, as some distinctive and wondrous experience, does not exist at all, or only in the imagination of old maids and naïve co-eds. Communists are possessed only of a physical urge—not a feeling, but a plain indispensable physical need." (*Humanity Uprooted*, p. 124.)

All of which is a rather roundabout way of declaring that fornication and adultery, so far from being vices or even social offences, are no more than necessary physical exercises.

Very little consideration is needful to realise something of the catastrophic change which the

official proclamation of such ideas has in fact wrought in Russia. The Russians, like the rest of us, are human beings, and love and marriage and family represent as much to them as to us. The revolutionary attempt to destroy these ideas is no less foolish than the attempt to circumvent economic law. No such revolution can finally succeed. But in the meantime what a price it may exact! If the reader will stretch his imagination and think of an English Prime Minister giving expression to such ideas and then try to measure the consequences in every English factory or suburb, he will have a picture of the actual state of affairs on the other side of the Russian border to-day.

The fiction of the civilised world is almost wholly occupied with the difficulties which we find in maintaining our standards, although the whole force of public opinion and authority are behind them. It is not, therefore, hard to imagine what would happen to us if authority were transferred to the sponsors of the anti-God idea, if all our libertines and free love enthusiasts suddenly found themselves, by reason of their habits and views, in positions of social leadership, and the rest of us were, not forbidden to practise the old methods, but held up to ridicule by our political leaders as old-fashioned and unintellectual for so doing. Here again the essential connection between the religious and the economic sides of revolution can be seen very clearly. We should not ordinarily extend that degree of

confidence which is required for a public position or for the management of a bank to a man who openly flouted the need for living only with his wife. Thus, for the purposes of the revolution, the wife and the bank must be destroyed together, or so the argument runs.

The Bolsheviks are quite right in thinking that nine-tenths of the necessity for private property is engendered from the notion of parental proprietary in children, and that the attack on property will not succeed so long as the family is founded upon the responsibilities of the parent to the child or the child to the parent. The family must, therefore, go. The process is to be a gradual one. Marriage as an institution is still, for the time being, recognised, only the religious ceremony is proscribed. The Communist proper is forbidden to indulge in any form of religious marriage, and the rest of the people are informed that nothing of the kind is recognised in law. Marriage is by registration, two parties signing a book as they would an employment register at home. Marriage is hardly the word to apply to the process. An English judge the other day, dealing with a Russian's application for divorce, ruled that marriage in our sense did not exist in Russia. Divorce is easier, for it can be obtained by either party by merely writing off the previous entry. Such minor complications as children, while admitted to have nothing to do with Communism, are for the moment, as a temporary transitional matter, taken into account. Where, therefore,

children exist, both parties to the marriage must be parties to the divorce and have their employment cards marked with a standing charge for the children's maintenance. The simplicity of the scheme is the best proof of its futility as a practical measure. It is easy to visualise the difficulties of correct accountancy between a much-married woman, with four ex-husbands and three children, especially when the periods of the marriages have been too short to establish even the presumption that a particular man is the father of a particular child. Blackmail is becoming a regular feminine occupation. Such cases are common and add a good deal to the social interests of life in those little communities where Bolshevik practices have secured any hold at all.

The reader will, however, be quick to notice how fatal is any such set of circumstances to the basic idea of family property and understand the temptation for the Communist preacher to encourage these unnatural practices.

> " All divorces in Russia are as simple. No legal representation is necessary. No briefs of complaint are required. The clerk in attendance of this registration . . . enters names and dates and places on the divorce sheets with no more concern than other clerks record the cost of herring or kerosene. It is all so informal, so matter of fact. People stand in line for their divorce with the same display of patience and good nature that they show when they wait their turn to buy a loaf of bread." (*Humanity Uprooted*, p. 115.)

It is not necessary to go to Russia to observe what this means or how it works. It is not even

necessary to know how far these facilities are utilised or to what extent this abuse has spread. Official explanations of the law are more than sufficient to give all the information required for a right understanding of the real position. Many of us who can look back upon long years of married happiness will readily confess that a large part of that very happiness consists in having survived odd periods when such divorce facilities would have brought the marriage to an untimely end, and thus robbed us of our triumph and our joy. To realise the wholesale disaster of this revolutionary position is not necessarily to deny that a certain amount of hardship and injustice is associated with our own system and practice. Those who think that the hardship is widespread enough to justify the abolition of the system itself will do well to study Russia as an aid to a full realisation of the implications of their argument.

The frantic efforts of Moscow to undo some of the worst of the damage done by its own policy, without denying or rescinding that policy, constitute the best evidence of the horrors wrought by these ideas. Public lectures on venereal diseases delivered to mixed audiences ; illustrated posters on personal cleanliness ; indeed a great deal of the much-vaunted education, are merely propaganda to check abuses which arise naturally out of Bolshevism itself. The legalisation of abortion requires no more than a mention ; of itself it demonstrates, without the need of any argument

or evidence, the ghastly nature of this great human tragedy.

I find it hard to decide for myself whether Mr. Maurice Hindus in his masterly analysis of the whole situation desires to favour or to expose the theory and practice of Communism, but his chapters on Sex, Love, and Family deserve the widest circulation.

It is quite idle to pretend, as some of us in our laziness are inclined to do, that Russia is an interesting experiment in new ideas, some of which may prove good, others bad, and that in the end the world will be better for the experience gained. Such an attitude is an admission of failure to grasp the nature or the seriousness of the issues. There is no lack of faith and heat on the Communist side of the argument, and lukewarm opposition must prove wholly ineffective. The case can perhaps best be stated with cold precision. The bedrock of civilisation as we know it is the family. The family is founded upon certain definite and accepted ideas about sexual intercourse and the obligations of man to woman and woman to man. These are strengthened by the notion of the permanence of love, and, behind them all, or perhaps above them all, is a body of ideas which constitute religion. There falls upon each of us the responsibility of deciding for ourselves whether this civilisation is to be preserved or destroyed. It is not a question of minor amendments but of the maintenance or abolition of the main ideas. The tremendous strength of the attack upon what we

have hitherto regarded as our foundations impels us to go to their defence or admit their uselessness. The presence of a great nation, within the confines of Europe, where all our standards are officially taboo and all our weaknesses glorified with governmental approval, is a menace such as civilisation has never previously faced. Recognition of such a government implies infinitely more than mere courtesy between nations and can only be taken by the world to mean that we have ceased to attach importance to all that on which our society has hitherto relied for existence. The Bolsheviks are absolutely right in thinking these to be questions which have nothing whatever to do with any particular nation. They are world questions, hence the World Revolution.

Nobody pretends that the sexual revolution has made much progress with the decent majority of the Russian people, but it throws a good deal of light on the success of the economic upheaval. The two things go together in the skilful hands of the Moscow Marxians. The distribution of property—food, clothes, housing accommodation; places at the so-called schools and universities, are so arranged as to favour those who accept these anti-social ideas. The passport or labour card of each individual contains good and bad marks. A note, for instance, as to membership of some religious body will cause the holder to stand behind a better proletarian in the queue outside the bread shop. One does not need to be told of the power which such a system places in the hands of a

foreman over a factory girl or of the obvious pressure on the girl to become a Communist in sexual and other ways. The end of the Revolution, when it comes, will leave an amount of economic damage difficult enough to repair, but if it is much longer delayed, will also leave a nation of bastards and a prostitute mother class the taint of which will take far longer to eradicate.

In fairness to the leaders of the Revolution and the authors of Communism, it should be remembered that they have almost always been devoid of any knowledge or experience of normal, decent, social family life. Marx himself was an exile from Germany, and a refugee from France. Engels similarly suffered at the hands of the society he plotted to destroy. Lenin was started on his career by the execution of his brother at seventeen years of age, and his own experience of the world alternated between poverty and prison. It is not, therefore, even reasonable to look to such people for a reliable valuation of the institutions against which they gave their energies and their lives.

The sum total of all our revolutionaries is part of the price which civilisation pays for the overzealous activities of some of its appointed guardians. Marx and Lenin have set up a record figure, but every time we forget the principles of freedom in our enthusiasm for order, we create a debit which the revolutionary seldom fails to collect.

CHAPTER VI

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND RUSSIA

THERE are people who say that the French Revolution can be held to justify the Russian, and that, just as the culture and happiness of France developed out of one revolution, so the future of Russia is assured through the medium of a similar trial. In particular, they will argue, the shootings, executions, and murders indulged in by the Bolsheviks are just as necessary a part of their upheaval as the guillotine was of the French Revolution.

The analogy would no doubt be true if applied to the first Russian Revolution, to Kerensky and his short-lived attempt to apply to serious abuses the method by which the French got rid of a similar incubus. But on examination the absence of any real similarity between the Bolsheviks and the French revolutionaries becomes clear. In both cases we see at first a revolt against the existing order ; both revolts were raised under a banner bearing the symbol of liberty. But the French meant liberty, the Bolsheviks have never understood the word. The French fought to establish " Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité," and from the first to the last they have always kept this object in mind. No one, least of all the members of the Government of Russia itself, would venture to claim that there was a single fragment of Liberté, or of Egalité, or of Fraternité, to be found in their objects or their methods or the possible consequences of either. So far as some imitation of these

things may eventually evolve from the present chaos, we have it on the authority of the official Five Year Plan that by 1933 they will apply at most to 15,724,000 people.

The French revolutionaries, first with the assistance of the guillotine and afterwards by more constitutional methods, rid themselves of the abuses of the past. The Russian revolutionaries, on the other hand, except for the person and the family of the Czar and his immediate associates, have adopted, maintained, enlarged, and intensified all the oppressive machinery of Czardom, and have raised the worst parts of it to the status of the glorified agents of a great and sacred cause. The troubles, such as they were, of the Russian people in the time of the Czar arose, not from anything that the Czar did directly, but from the actions of his secret police, his agents, and his officials. The removal of a nominal head has made little or no difference to these persons or to their methods, except that they have been multiplied and their powers extended. The Czar and Stalin have this in common—that they both represent minorities ruling by force. The one ruled by virtue of an old idea of kingship, exercising a well-understood power, recognised in the rest of the world as tyrannical and oppressive, and recognised in Russia itself as ripe for limitation. The Bolsheviks claim far more power over life and property than was ever in his wildest moment dreamed of by any Czar, and unlike the Czar, they day by day force the evidence of that power upon the people

over whom they have for the moment secured jurisdiction.

The simple answer to those who entertain any misapprehension, and who still think that the French Revolution can provide more than a fragment of support for the Bolshevik upheaval, is the Declaration of the Rights of Man. I reprint this historic document in full. It will interest my readers who are not acquainted with it as showing the progress of human thought since 1791.

DECLARATION
of the
RIGHTS OF MAN AND OF CITIZENS,
By the National Assembly of France.

" The Representatives of the people of France, formed into a National Assembly, considering that ignorance, neglect, or contempt of human rights, are the sole causes of public misfortunes and corruptions of Government, have resolved to set forth, in a solemn declaration, these natural, imprescriptible, and unalienable rights : that this declaration being constantly present to the minds of the members of the body social, they may be ever kept attentive to their rights and their duties : that the acts of the legislative and executive powers of Government, being capable of being every moment compared with the end of political institutions, may be more respected : and also, that the future claims of the citizens, being directed by simple and incontestible principles, may always tend to the maintenance of the Constitution, and the general happiness.

" For these reasons, the National Assembly doth recognise and declare, in the presence of the Supreme Being, and with the hopes of His blessing and favour, the following *sacred* rights of men and of citizens :

"*I. Men are born, and always continue, free, and equal in respect of their rights. Civil distinctions, therefore, can be founded only on public utility.*

"*II. The end of all political associations is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man; and these rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance of oppression.*

"*III. The nation is essentially the source of all sovereignty; nor can any* INDIVIDUAL, *or* ANY BODY OF MEN, *be entitled to any authority which is not expressly derived from it.*

"IV. Political Liberty consists in the power of doing whatever does not injure another. The exercise of the natural rights of every man has no other limits than those which are necessary to secure to every *other* man the free exercise of the same rights; and these limits are determinable only by the law.

"V. The law ought to prohibit only actions hurtful to society. What is not prohibited by the law should not be hindered; nor should anyone be compelled to that which the law does not require.

"VI. The law is an expression of the will of the community. All citizens have a right to concur, either personally or by their representatives, in its formation. It should be the same to all, whether it protects or punishes; and *all being equal in its sight, are equally eligible to all honours, places, and employments, according to their different abilities, without any other distinction than that created by their virtues and talents.*

"VII. No man should be accused, arrested, or held in confinement, except in cases determined by the law, and according to the forms which it has prescribed. All who promote, solicit, execute, or cause to be executed, arbitrary orders, ought to be punished; and every citizen called upon, or apprehended by virtue of the law, ought immediately to obey, and renders himself culpable by resistance.

"VIII. The law ought to impose no other penalties but such as are absolutely and evidently necessary: and no one ought to be punished, but in virtue of a law promulgated before the offence, and legally applied.

"IX. Every man being presumed innocent till he has been convicted, whenever his detention becomes indispensible, all

rigour to him, more than is necessary to secure his person, ought to be provided against by the law.

" X. No man ought to be molested on account of his opinions, not even on account of his *religious* opinions, provided his avowal of them does not disturb the public order established by the law.

" XI. The unrestrained communication of thoughts and opinions being one of the most precious rights of man, every citizen may speak, write, and publish freely, provided he is responsible for the abuse of this liberty in cases determined by the law.

" XII. A public force being necessary to give security to the rights of men and of citizens, that force is instituted for the benefit of the community, and not for the particular benefit of the persons with whom it is entrusted.

" XIII. A common contribution being necessary for the support of the public force, and for defraying the other expenses of government, it ought to be divided equally among the members of the community, according to their abilities.

" XIV. Every citizen has a right, either by himself or his representative, to a free voice in determining the necessity of public contributions, the appropriation of them, and their amount, mode of assessment, and duration.

" XV. Every community has a right to demand of all its agents an account of their conduct.

" XVI. Every community in which a separation of powers and a security of rights is not provided for, wants a constitution.

" XVII. The right to property being inviolable and sacred, no one ought to be deprived of it, except in cases of evident public necessity, legally ascertained, and on condition of a previous just indemnity."

There is very little indeed in the seventeen paragraphs of this declaration which most Conservatives would to-day find much difficulty in accepting. It would cause some trouble to Socialists, who would discover for the first time that the French

Revolution was promoted in the interests of property. As will be seen, there is hardly a line, if indeed a single word, in this, the basis of the French Revolution, which would be acceptable to the present leaders of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. It might indeed be recommended to those who care to study further the theory of the Russian Revolution, and its bearing on the affairs of the world, that they should read, if not the whole of the political and miscellaneous works of Thomas Paine, at least *The Rights of Man*, his reply to Burke. Paine, it will be remembered, was the American who took upon himself the duty of defending the French Revolution. I doubt very much whether those who claim to justify Russia by France will be able to find in the whole of the writings of Thomas Paine anything but the most direct condemnation of all that has happened in the last ten years in Russia. In particular, Paine is direct and illuminating on the question of debt. The following quotation might almost have been written as a part of the controversy on Russian debts and credits :

" Although the French Nation rendered the late Government insolvent, it did not permit the insolvency to act towards the creditors ; and the creditors considering the Nation as the real paymaster, and the Government only as the agent, rested themselves on the Nation, in preference to the Government. This appears greatly to disturb Mr. Burke, as the precedent is fatal to the policy by which Governments have supposed themselves secure. They have contracted debts, with a view of attaching what is called the monied interest of a Nation to their support ; but the example in France shows that the

permanent security of the creditor is in the Nation, and not in the Government ; and that, in all possible revolutions that may happen in Governments, the means are always with the Nation, and the Nation always in existence. Mr. Burke argues that the creditors ought to have abided the fate of the Government which they trusted ; but the National Assembly considered them as the creditors of the Nation, and not of the Government—of the master, and not of the steward."

CHAPTER VII

GOSSIP FROM THE BALTIC STATES

INFLUENCE, one would think, always radiates from some centre outwards. Enthusiasm for any cause, or creed, or school of thought is to be found, in the ordinary way, at its maximum at the headquarters of the movement, and proximity to that spot generates a sympathy with the ideas involved. The Bolshevik movement, however, defeats every preconceived idea and contradicts every argument with a logical basis. As one journeys from London to the Russian border, instead of finding an ever-increasing sympathy with Russian ideas, one is confronted with an ever-increasing antagonism to and hatred of them. It may be said that such influence as Moscow possesses in the world to-day is greatest at those spots which are farthest removed from Moscow itself. At all events, journeying towards the Russian border, the traveller will find that every mile increases the intensity of opinion against Bolshevik ideas. When eventually one reaches the border States themselves, the atmosphere is tense and earnest, and the determination of everybody is to impress one with the iniquities of the Russian Revolution. I made a leisurely journey, following part of the way in the steps of Stephen Graham, along the Western Russian frontier. In Norway there is a fairly active Communist Party, with a small representation in the Storthing. Norway is at least two countries removed from the Russian border. In Sweden there is also a Communist Party which is at least a good deal better

as a party than our own, but so far as I could gather it counts for very little. At a recent party congress a resolution was moved to abolish the Royal Family, and was withdrawn on the representation of a Communist Member of Parliament, who pointed out the futility of the proceeding because, as he said, if it were possible to elect a president of the Swedish soviets, the present King would undoubtedly be voted to the position. That seems to me to give the measure of the Communist strength in Sweden. The influence of the Bolsheviks, however, is sufficiently evident in another way. Sweden is armed to the teeth and is very proud of her military efficiency. She has a sort of conscription, and her youth is trained in warlike ways. When you talk to responsible Swedes, and ask for a justification of this militarism, the reply is always and promptly: "Russia." A Swedish professor who cannot be accused of undue sympathy with capitalism or with the present economic structure of society, nevertheless defended militarist tendencies in Sweden. His argument was that Russia, like Italy, is in a thoroughly unnatural state. Its rulers are attempting the impossible, and some day—not perhaps very distant—they will have to find some way out of the intolerable situation which they have created. A condition of things which was bad under the Czars is infinitely worse under Bolshevism and gets rapidly more desperate. My professor friend declared that the only way known to history of escape from such a situation is the way of war, and the Bolsheviks will, therefore, before

very long, have no alternative but to declare war on somebody. He used, in fact, the argument which we have already heard from the mouth of General Smuts. For this reason Sweden must arm. The League of Nations is, he says, a great idea, and Sweden, without much enthusiasm, hopes well of it. But when the crisis comes, all the League will be able to do will be to call on the big nations to support Sweden, Finland, and Latvia, if those places are attacked. No big nation, the professor argued, is likely to help Sweden if she does not try to help herself. Hence the necessity for armaments. The argument may be good or bad. That for my purpose is beside the point. It remains a fact that in making up our account with Bolshevism, we must reckon on one side or the other of it the cost, the damage, and the risk to world peace, whatever these may be, arising from the present militarism of Sweden.

Crossing from Sweden to Finland brings the traveller for the first time on to former Russian soil, and brings him into closer contact with the Russian problem in one or other of its many aspects. Finland is, as one might expect, also armed to the teeth. Not only has it a very efficient regular army, but a numerous and enthusiastic voluntary force. I travelled from Abo to Helsingfors, a five-hour train journey, on a Sunday, and was able to witness at a dozen stopping-places the masses of volunteers taking their week-end exercises in uniform. This citizen army is peculiar in that it contains a very large women's section, and

that the women do not accept the theory that their functions are confined to the tenderer sides of warfare.

In so far as the enjoyment of a week-end in Finland or anywhere depends upon one's peace of mind, my sojourn in this hospitable country was unsatisfactory. All the entertainment, all the kindness and courtesy which were showered upon me could not remove the mental discomfort of constant contact with the crimes and horrors of revolution. It is rather more than ten years since Finland overcame the attempt to make it part of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. In 1917 independence was declared as a result of clever preparation by a few devoted patriots during the period of the war. Chief among these should be mentioned Professor Reuter who, after the manner of Masaryk and Benes of Czecho-Slovakia, canvassed America in 1915 and Paris and London in 1917, preparing the way for a Finnish Republic. The actual declaration was made during the Kerensky revolution, but the country was full of Russian soldiers. They killed their officers and set up a red terror. There followed a desperate Red and White civil war in which many Swedish volunteers participated. The horrid details, still fresh in the minds of most Finns, are thrust upon the attention of the English visitor to reinforce his mind if he has any doubts upon the murderous character of the Communist idea. The present Republic and Constitution were set up in 1918, and the Finns are succeeding in a really wonderful way

in establishing a stable order. Ten years is not a long period in which to get a country going, and one expects to hear of mistakes. They do not, however, appear to have been big or serious. I am told that there has been considerable over-building. Be that as it may, Abo, Helsingfors, and Viborg are to-day fine cities, and if some of the company balance sheets require reconstruction, the buildings are as solid as they can be. The political situation in Finland, as will be understood, is quite different from anything existing elsewhere. The Communists are fairly numerous and fairly active. They were strong enough to carry on a civil war. They are supported by daily broadcast propaganda from Russia, which works in a peculiar way. It undoubtedly heartens and encourages the minority which is committed to Communist doctrines, but I judge that the reactions in the other direction are far more important and have more strength. All these Finns have personal experience gathered in their own revolution, and the Moscow propaganda only heightens the determination of the majority to have nothing whatever to do with Russia. In a practical and physical way this determination is carried out to the limit. There is only one train a day between Helsingfors and Leningrad, and a main line of railway is thus hardly used. Steamship communication between Leningrad and Viborg or Helsingfors has absolutely ceased, and where at one time there was a big and vigorous coastwise trade no single ship of any size is to be found. The Finns keep their border

line strongly guarded, and like all these Baltic States are sorely pressed in the difficulty of doing justice to the many refugees who try to cross the frontier. The Finns claim that in cases of extreme hardship they will admit a refugee and do what they can for him, but as a rule they follow the practice of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, and right along the Baltic the unfortunate sufferers are turned back in the hope that they will not try again. The Finns, however, do not welcome an Englishman in order to talk about Finland. They are proud enough of their remarkable achievements, but they take those for granted. Their anxiety in conversation is to impress the traveller with the iniquities of Russia. This tendency is perhaps most marked in diplomatic circles, but it goes right through. The story is the same everywhere—the madness of the English Government in treating these murderers as if they were civilised ! Finland apologises for the fact that, because it is a small nation and next door, it must recognise the *de facto* Russian Government and must maintain a Russian Minister in Helsingfors. But you are told quite frankly that this functionary is chiefly occupied in acting as a depôt for Russian literature and an agency for Russian propaganda in the rest of the world. The fine Bolshevik building on the Parade at Helsingfors is nothing more nor less than a branch office for the export of Communism. This sort of conversation is rendered the more trying by the importance which the Finns very rightly attach to England's position in the

world at large. They appeal to one, as it were, to save them. It is, so they argue, quite impossible for them in their small way to protest or complain or refuse if Great Britain can be quoted against them. They think, and think rightly, that in London we are not conscious of the full measure of our responsibility to the rest of the world in this sort of way.

I made a careful note of a conversation with the wife of a foreign diplomat in Helsingfors. She claimed that Finland was, at the moment, the most interesting place in the world. Sitting in Helsingfors, one was within a few miles east and west of two extremes. On the west, Sweden, perhaps the most highly civilised country in the world, characterised by pride, cleanliness, industry, and, above all, domesticity. On the east, Russia, which, according to this lady, has always been beyond the pale, not only since the Revolution, but before. It is impossible to find a place to sit down in a Russian building until you have cleaned and disinfected it. They are a fatalistic, inefficient, ignorant people, possessing all the worst of the characteristics of the most hopeless *laisser faire*.

Finland will provide us in the next few years with interesting problems of its own. A wonderful country, splendidly managed, with a population of 3,500,000, and only one resource—timber. The industry is organised in a most efficient way. Notwithstanding a vigorous export business, the cutting of the forests is on a scientific basis, and

the natural timber resources get stronger rather than weaker. But Finland has 5,000 students in the University of Helsingfors. The country is, from the publishers' point of view, something like a paradise. I found rotary presses at work printing translations of English fiction. People are asking, and not without reason, if this is the mind of the Finn, what is going to happen when 5,000 university students find nothing to do but chop down trees.

Among the many interesting developments to be discovered in Finland is a practical attempt to compromise between Socialism and Capitalism. The big timber mill at Enso, one of the finest establishments of its kind in the world, is privately managed and publicly owned. The business was originally established by a Norwegian firm with Belgian capital. Then, following the revolution, there was an understandable wave of nationalism which demanded that Finnish industries should be Finnish owned. No private Finnish capital was available, and a number of strange forces seem to have joined together to bring about the present position. There were the Socialists wanting nationalisation, the Finns wanting to be rid of the foreigner, and a few politicians wanting jobs or commissions. All these came together in a demand for the purchase by the State of the foreign shares. In the result, the Finnish Government owns 87 per cent. of the capital of the Enso Company, and appoints a supervisory board on which all the seven political parties to be found in the Diet have

to be represented. This board, as may well be expected, is something of a difficulty at times to the working directors, but, so far, things have gone along without catastrophe. The idea of Government purchase of industrial shares has been extended to other industries, and a big textile mill at Abo is another example of the same movement.

The liking of the Finnish workman for Bolshevism and its ways is not enhanced by the obvious fact that the Russian workers are keeping their fellows in Finland in a condition of very dire poverty. The Enso works to which I have referred have managed for some years to scrape out a 6 per cent. dividend on their capital, not an extravagant return from an industry which is conducted with great efficiency, but this figure is accompanied by wages to the women of about 15 shillings, and the men of about 30 shillings a week, respectively. These figures, it is true, mean more than they seem, because life at Enso is very simple, rents are not worth mentioning, fuel is free, supplies (such as they are) cheap. Nevertheless, women are working a twelve-hour day at strenuous tasks for 15 shillings a week, and even so, are threatened with unemployment because the Russians are supplying our and their markets at prices much lower than the Finns can accept. It is not pretended, even by the Bolsheviks, that the Finns could go lower. It is not suggested that there is any waste or lack of efficiency in the Finnish method or the Finnish equipment. It is universally agreed that

with the marvellous system of water transport through the 36,000 lakes of Finland, with mills on the water's edge, with machinery of the most up-to-date description, the Finns are able to deliver timber to the world in competition with anybody who wants to live. They therefore argue, not without justice, but with considerable fervour, that the Russians do not want to live ; that the Bolsheviks do not care whether the Russians live or not. They have one object, and one object only, in delivering timber to London or to any other market. That object is to get cash, not to pay Russian wages, but to conduct Communist propaganda.

Finland differs radically from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in that Finnish independence is an established and a permanent thing. Finland believes that it can carry on as an independent State. It is supported in this idea by a history of independence. For two centuries it managed to maintain a greater degree of independence of the Czar than any other people under his iron rule. The spirit of independence is not therefore a new thing in Finland, and the situation and resources of the country make an independent existence a practical proposition. When, however, we come to the other border States, we find slices of the old Russia maintaining from political fervour a social independence which, from an economic or geographical point of view, cannot be regarded as either permanent or satisfactory. These three countries are the natural seaboard of Russia, and there is plenty

of responsible opinion to be found in each of them for the view that they would welcome an opportunity to join up with a sane and civilised Russia. They look forward to the day when Russian territory will again be open to the beneficent processes of civilisation, and when they will then act as the chief agents of communication between a world in which life is possible and the diseased and distressed remnants of the Bolshevik terror.

While in Finland one is impressed with a sense of settlement, a people struggling with a conscious purpose, and the feeling that they will succeed in maintaining an important and self-contained sovereign State, the rest of the border countries give one a totally different impression. The first approach to Estonia after the five-hour trip across the Gulf of Finland is through the derelict harbour of Reval or Tallin. Perhaps "derelict" is too strong a word; there is still a certain amount of ship-repairing to be seen there, and pneumatic drills are not altogether silent. Still, the sight of a fine natural harbour, with docks and warehouses to match, doing a mere 10 per cent. of the business for which it is equipped is depressing. Tallin shares with Riga the natural duty of caring for Russian import and export business. It is more accessible than Leningrad, and is practically free from the risk of ice. The harbour is typical of the whole of the industrial equipment of this part of the world. Riga is the most depressing place I remember to have visited. The new part of the town would vie with many Continental cities in the grandeur and

convenience of its buildings, and the facilities it offers for carrying on trade. But it reminds me to-day of what Vienna was immediately after the partition of Austria. Riga is far too pretentious a city for such a trifling commerce as can be done by the diminutive Latvian State. A very simple test of the real position of Riga is put into the hands of the traveller immediately upon arrival. There are for practical purposes no hotels, or, rather, the hotels that are there, with one exception, are the same as they were twenty years ago. This simple test really gives the whole story, for the traveller knows from experience of the rest of Europe and of the whole world what progress has been made in the way of accommodation for his comfort. In Riga no such progress has been thought of, for the reason that the accommodation is not required.

I was immensely struck by the old-fashioned courage and pluck and patriotism of the members of the English colony. They get together in an English club, once prosperous, now struggling, which is a very oasis to the weary traveller in this land of trouble. Here is a band of Englishmen, most of them established before the war, and some of them arriving since, doing in the quiet ways of commerce much more than they get credit for in the work of civilisation. My ten days in this part of the world did not give me much time to bother with my fellow-countrymen. I was far too busy making what contacts I could with the Russian Latvians. These people are, of course, all émigrés.

They have all left Russia and become Latvians because they do not like the Bolsheviks, and therefore the evidence which they give with one accord to the enquirer is admittedly biassed and tainted. The case against the present Government of Russia which can be made up from the evidence of émigrés is overwhelming, but from the nature of the evidence it is one that should be accepted with caution. It is not necessary to go as far as Riga to collect it, for the Russian colonies in Berlin, or, better still, Paris, will furnish the enquirer with all and more than he requires of this class of information. Yet somehow within a few miles of the Russian border and, as it transpired in my case, sometimes within a few days of the actual occurrence related, the evidence acquires a weight which impresses those who study it. If there be added to this tainted testimony all the information which we have been discussing, culled from official Soviet pronouncements and from admitted common knowledge, then the one-sided nature of the émigrés' story seems to assume the quality of truth.

I placed myself in a very favourable position for collecting evidence. I did not go on a mission of enquiry with introductions to selected people, neither did I go as a journalist in search of copy. I adopted the pose of a lecturer. As some of my readers will be aware, distant countries like this are very glad to see anyone from England who is willing to talk to them. So the Latvian Merchants' Club, the Anglo-Latvian Society, the Chamber of

Commerce, and the University lecture rooms gave me a welcome and brought me into direct personal touch with every grade of society. I was given interviews by Ministers as well as by labourers. The newspapers found in me copy which seemed to them good, with the result that all sorts of people sought me out and tried to impress their views upon me. At the time of my visit, the news of the recognition of the Soviet Union by the Government of Great Britain had just been made public, and the main object of most of my friends in Estonia and Latvia, and indeed in Finland, seemed to be to impress me with the disastrous consequences of this diplomatic submission.

At home, self depreciation being our favourite recreation, it is difficult to maintain an adequate impression of the importance of England and the Englishman. We are so occupied with our own affairs as to forget that the rest of the world looks upon us as the repository of political wisdom. We do not remember as often as we should that whatever we do in the matter of governing ourselves, or in the matter of our relations with foreign powers, becomes from the moment of our doing it a model for the procedure of the rest of the world.

It happened by chance that my first serious chat was with the secretary of a foreign legation, and we fell talking about the reform of the marriage laws in Russia. I was completely misled by this interesting person as to what was to follow for the rest of my stay, for I found in him, not an enthusiastic, but a reasoned supporter of the Soviet

Revolution. He was not very worried about the economic side of things, which, from a diplomat, did not surprise me. To him trade was one of those unpleasant necessities that have to be done somehow and he looked upon it much as do many of our own politicians and bureaucrats. As long as it was done it did not much matter whether the Government or some low private individuals performed the operation. But he was enthusiastic about the frank way in which the Bolsheviks had grappled with all the old-time nonsense about sex and marriage. According to him, our marriage laws were things of the past. Nobody observed them, inside or outside Russia. He professed to know a good deal about the life of Berlin, and did not doubt that Paris and London were equally progressive. The shop girls of Berlin paid no more attention to marriage laws than did the newly freed women of Russia. They claimed the right to indulge their sexual impulses without any regard to commandments made by Moses, and almost as worn out. Russia, therefore, so my diplomatic friend claimed, had merely taken the obvious, sensible, and statesmanlike step of making the statute book correspond to the everyday practice of all intelligent and sensible people. That was my first chat after crossing the Gulf of Finland, and it caused me to hope that I had got a great deal nearer to the heart of Russia than subsequently proved to be the case. Apart from this one conversation, ten days did not produce to me a single sentence of good about affairs on the other side of the border.

Opinion, as I have previously hinted, is perhaps most fixed in official and diplomatic circles. My first acquaintance was the exception which proved the rule. There is not in that part of the world a Minister or a consul of any country, so far as I know, who will not be glad to give as much fact and figure as the enquirer can carry to show the immorality, impracticability, or criminality of the Russian system of government. The Soviet system as an electoral machine is a possible thing. It is at least a system, and the best thing that could happen to Russia would be that this machine should be seized by people with sensible ideas. The Soviet electoral system is not democratic, although it bears upon it a certain semblance of democracy. We have, in the past, had something like it in a much modified form at work in our country, and we know exactly what it means. There is a small measure of similarity between the present Russian system and the way that London was governed prior to the 'eighties. Elderly Londoners will remember how the old vestries were got together at the bidding of the parsons. The vestries elected second-hand representatives to the Metropolitan Board of Works. And how many were the abuses that arose out of that system, although in London it was fairly simple and worked in the natural, honest atmosphere of the metropolis! The operation of the same system is at work to-day in an institution like the Miners' Federation. Small unions and small branches are got together by small groups of enthusiasts who get themselves elected

to county federations and national assemblies and are thus able to speak in the name of the miners as a whole with a semblance of democratic support for their policy and their utterances. But this system of delegate representation, when applied to a vast country and to 140,000,000 people, is a very pretty thing on paper but a purely farcical thing in practice. The membership of the village soviet is first of all confined to Communists and those who can pass the test as proletarians. Thus the owner of two cows, the kulak, has no vote. This body, with such shreds of representative character as it can claim to possess, proceeds to send a delegate to a county soviet, which in turn elects representatives to a higher body responsible for a bigger district, and at the fifth or sixth remove in this nomination process we arrive at the central government in Moscow.

The original notion that the Government represents the people has even to Russians proved such an obvious farce that the Soviet system is now boldly recognised as a machine for making the people represent the Government. The machinery might nevertheless well remain, for it requires a good deal of courage and optimism to visualise a successful and real democracy in Russia. If it passed into sane hands it would work without the control of the Communist International and the Communist political bureau. At present the whole of the machinery is nothing more than a convenient system of pipes through which to distribute the decisions of these bodies.

Chatting to Ministers and diplomats on the other side of the Baltic, one gets the Russian problem into better perspective and, among other things, realises the comparative insignificance of the economic side of Bolshevism. The economic development only attracted Lenin, and only attracts his successors, so long as they can hope in that way to give an example to the world of the advantages of revolution. If, however, world upheaval could be secured in any other way, the economic development of Russia would be scrapped to-morrow. Lenin and all the official exponents of Bolshevism have told us again and again that their purpose is world revolution. But I for one failed to grasp the significance of that perfectly open declaration until I had the advantage of so close an examination of the problem as is possible in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Russia and the Russian people are a mere pawn in the great game, and their interests, indeed their lives, would be sacrificed in an instant if the game could be made a success that way. A right understanding of this aspect of the matter sweeps away most of one's difficulties in comprehending day-by-day occurrences in Russia itself. I have been guilty of an attempt to reconcile the murder of, say, masses of Russian Christians, or the wiping out without explanation of 36,000 unemployed in Moscow, with the true interests of the Russian people. The task is an impossible one, and ceases to be of interest when one understands the differences between Bolshevism and Russia. Russia is the victim of

Bolshevism, a system of world revolution, which is no more, in theory, to do with Russia than with Peru or Madagascar.

My first evening engagement in Riga was to lecture to a body of University students. It may be of interest to note in passing the great change between a meeting in Riga and one in, say, Helsingfors, Stockholm, or Oslo. These other places are remarkable for the magnificence and wealth of their public buildings. But in Riga I felt more at home. I was ushered into a lecture room with plain, distempered walls ; with mere benches to seat the audience, and with a small table and kitchen chair for the lecturer. There faced me some 300 boys and girls, young men and women—most of them, I was informed, students of economics and all of them students of English. Having in mind my talk with the anti-matrimonial foreign diplomat, I imagined myself to be in for a hard evening's work. The audience in appearance was not unlike many that I have addressed in places like the London School of Economics, and I expected to find them an enthusiastic body of young Socialists, full of new ideas for putting the world on to a newer basis. I gave them forty-five minutes on capitalism, a subject which in England arouses a good deal of controversy. Had I delivered my lecture at, say, King's College, London, I should have been kept in my place for the rest of the evening, listening to speeches from budding orators, explaining to me and to my audience how foolish, if not wicked, were the ideas to which I had given

utterance. Imagine, therefore, my surprise on resuming my seat, to find these boys and girls, who ought in any healthy, normal society, and in the nature of things, to be tainted with Socialism, to be far more violent reactionaries than ever I hope to be. I was loaded up with illustrations of the folly and iniquity of government action and, of course and always, begged as an Englishman to use what influence I could to get England to renounce even such approval as was involved in our recognition of the Soviet Government.

At lunch the following day I am regaled with the story of the massacre or imprisonment of the whole of the native staff of the last British Legation in Moscow. This story is hard to believe, but it was repeated to me in half a dozen different places and finally confirmed in Berlin. It certainly fits in with the argument and policy of the Russian Government. Such an intimate contact with the outside world as would be available to the staff of the British Legation is dangerous to the prestige of the Russian Government at home, and seeing that in the normal process of maintaining that prestige a quota of the people must be shot daily, there seems no particular reason why the unfortunate servants of the British Ambassador should be spared.

I did a certain amount of shopping in Riga; and in several places, thanks to the publicity which the Press had given to my features, I was recognised, and out of these simple circumstances several of my most illuminating conversations arose. The

proprietor of a small tobacco shop who, like most of these people, spoke very good English, begged me to enter his parlour for a chat, and here are my notes of that conversation :

The man, with his wife, had spent twenty years in London selling British herrings to Russia, his brother remaining in Moscow and conducting the import end of the business. His family was educated in England, and his eldest son, now helping to conduct a small tobacco shop in Riga, was the possessor of a diploma from London University. Before the war, Russia took the largest share of the total export of our herrings, but that business has now come to an end. The Russians now depend upon a few native herrings, except when, for diplomatic and political reasons, it suits the Government to purchase a foreign supply. Then, however, these supplies are dumped in the only way open to a Government, in any district which suits Moscow's immediate purpose. There are no arrangements for marketing them, and as is noted in a letter which I quote in another chapter, no bread to eat with them. Such remnants of the herring trade as are conducted by the Government are largely sheer waste. My tobacconist's brother had the misfortune, as it turned out, to secure as a young man a degree in the University of St. Petersburg. That fact constituted him for official purposes a Russian citizen. He was therefore debarred, and is still debarred, from leaving Russia. Previously a wealthy man, he is now living with his family on the borders of starvation,

earning a trifling wage as a clerk in the State Bank. My tobacconist's wife last spring paid a visit to her sister-in-law in Moscow. Finding the sister without sufficient clothing, she left behind her an old fur coat and returned to Riga. The day she departed from Moscow, the brother and the whole of his family were arrested over this fur coat, although after a week of enquiry and examination they were all released. Two charges were preferred against them—first, that of having the money to buy the fur coat ; secondly, of importing a fur coat other than through the Government agency.

Another shopkeeper with whom I got into touch in the same sort of way visited Russia a little over a year ago and bought a quantity of goods as his stock-in-trade. He hopes, as things get gradually better (pinning his faith to the New Economic Policy), to develop a merchant's business in Russian products. In the meantime he has given up buying in Russia although he still sells Russian goods. When he bought direct from the Government he had to pay in American dollars at the fictitious legal rate of exchange. The Russians would sell to him on no other basis. I suspect that the difficulty arose, as these sorts of difficulties do arise, owing to the misunderstanding of some minor official in the appropriate Government office. I can still well understand the desire of the Russians to secure American dollars, and well believe that some regulation, misunderstood by the official in question, has been framed with that

purpose in view. But my shopkeeper friend still sells Russian goods, which he buys from a German merchant who in turn secures them from a trading agent attached to the Russian Embassy in Berlin. This man claimed, and claimed with what appears to be some reason, that the Russians do not want trade in the sense in which we understand the term. Their only object is to collect foreign money. If they can put pressure on some small buyer who ventures to go direct to Moscow, they may try to get appropriate or excessive terms. When they appear in the freer market of Berlin, however, the object of the Russian Ambassador is to deliver big quantities of goods for which he is willing to accept any figure large enough to be of importance to his bank account, without any relation to or knowledge of the value of the goods with which he is parting. This very simple and concrete illustration from the mouth of a tradesman in Riga actually handling Russian finished goods fits in so exactly with the experience of British buyers of Russian timber as to be of value in arriving at a right understanding of Russian trading methods as a whole. Needless to say, my shopkeeper friend had no particular good to tell of life in Russia. The details of the privations of his brother and his unfortunate family differed in no particular essential from a score of similar stories to which I had to listen.

I had the good fortune to spend a whole afternoon, some three hours, with a dear old lady who only the week before had been in Leningrad, and

her story is worth a careful note in passing. This was a woman of 75 who, with a courage to be admired, had undertaken after eight years of absence a trip into her native land. Her husband before the war was a merchant and milliner in St. Petersburg. She and her two sons and their families remained in St. Petersburg for three years after the Revolution. Then there came one of those treaties with a border State which, as her husband had been born within the ceded territory, enabled her to claim another nationality and to leave Russia. One of her sons was able to comply with the complicated formalities, but the other had a mishap with his papers, and he literally missed the boat. This dear old soul, therefore, in her 75th year, has a family of grandchildren, half of them in Leningrad and half in Lithuania. After eight years' separation from the first half, she came to the conclusion, as people of 75 do, that with so little left of life in any case, the risks of a return to Russia for a visit of a month were worth taking. I need not weary the reader with a recitation of the horrors of life under Lenin from 1918 to 1921. All that is past history and is only of interest in the present connection because my old lady friend was able to assure me that, so far from there being any improvement, life under Stalin in 1929 was even worse. Allowances have to be made for the excesses associated with the excitement of revolution, and the horrors of a seven-day journey in an open railway truck to cover 300 or 400 miles from St. Petersburg were to be expected

so soon after such a great upheaval. When these horrors are repeated, however, in the case of the Mennonites who have left the country during the past few weeks, one's faith in all the stories of progress in Russia weakens. Mrs. X—I must not give her name—has arrived at a time of life when most of us become calm and philosophical, and adds to these qualities a sense of humour which helps a good deal in circumstances which, to any European, would contain nothing but depression and tragedy. She takes it, for instance, as a matter of course, after eight years' bitter experience, that every letter from her to her son—or from the son to the mother—which crosses the Russian frontier is opened and read by officials, even to this day.

On presenting herself at the Russian frontier, she is kept waiting for an afternoon while full and complete schedules are made of all her belongings, every article of clothing, every personal trinket and every paper. On arrival at Leningrad, the son, a man well advanced in years, collapses in tears, not from the joy of again seeing his mother, not from the excitement of a reunion for which he had hardly dared to hope, but because, if you please, the old lady has had the wisdom to come bare handed. He was so afraid that in her motherly way she might have brought gifts, and he knew, from the experience of his friends, of the difficulties and dangers associated with the possession of little luxuries from the outside world. I was reminded of the story of the old fur coat, which I picked up

in another connection. These strange rules and regulations create extraordinary new values and rates of exchange. Thus, when Mrs. X first left Leningrad as a refugee she was only allowed to take such luggage as she could herself carry and accommodate in an open railway truck with 28 other people. Faced with this dilemma, she sold a house full of furniture to a Jew, who was content to take all the risks associated with the New Economic Policy, and received in exchange a fur tippet, which she was glad enough in the circumstances to get. The son in Leningrad is not a Communist and stands no chance of becoming one, even if he thought it worth while to pay that price for comfort. His antecedents as the son of a Czarist merchant and a pre-war business man himself constitute a complete and absolute bar to entry into the Communist Party. Nevertheless, he has succeeded in securing a responsible technical position under the Soviet Government. In point of fact, he holds three such positions, and is therefore able to claim and receive the enormous salary of £30 a month. His technical standing also enables him to retain a flat of four rooms for the accommodation of himself and his family, and he is not subject to the billeting arrangements that trouble other people of his class. But, as a non-Communist, he is excluded from the benefit of the farcical rationing arrangements, and has to rely for his supplies of food upon such free market as remains from time to time between the continual variations of the New

Economic Policy. He and his wife share between them the daily duty of queuing up for bread, butter, and meat (if available). At the time of Mrs. X's visit, butter was fetching 20 roubles a kilo—about 8*s*. 6*d*. a pound. These supplies, like the ration allowances, are far from reliable, or so Mrs. X says. The political management of wholesale supplies means in effect that food and everything else go from time to time to those quarters where the agitation for them is strongest. It is, of course, possible in odd ways to get round these difficulties sometimes, as, for instance when a new grandchild was born to Mrs. X. In accordance with the vaunted mothercraft enthusiasm of the Bolsheviks, the daughter-in-law received an official ration for two years as a feeding mother—notwithstanding the fact that right from the date of birth the mother had never fed the baby at all. The rations were, however, welcome to this highly placed and distinguished family. Her son, says Mrs. X, does not complain. He is resigned and tolerant, for after all what else can he be? He gets, indeed, some joy out of the thought that for seven or eight years he has escaped the fate which has recently overwhelmed the Ukrainian intelligentsia and which falls almost automatically upon people of his class. He is a little perturbed that his children show no signs of deserting him and embracing Communism, the only sure and certain way of remaining in society—if that word can be used in such a connection.

Mrs. X expressed surprise that I should have

any difficulty in accepting the theory that Russian exports are used to pay for propaganda. Her son in Russia itself has always understood from the Russian Government that the first purpose of exports was to pay for propaganda and thus bring about the glories of the world revolution. No attempt, she says, is made to hide this fact from the Russian people, and the Communists among them take great pride in such personal sacrifices as they themselves make, believing that in this way they are helping towards their particular sort of millennium. Mrs. X understands the Russian mentality rather better than I can profess to do, and tried to explain to me how, with their genius for propaganda, the Bolsheviks were able to develop a considerable pride within Russia itself out of Russia's privations. Russia does not count. It is being sacrificed, and the revolutionary part of Russia glories in the sacrifice upon behalf of the great world cause.

It is, according to Mrs. X, a mistake to suppose that the plague of derelict children, of which a deal was heard a few years ago, has in any way abated. Sitting at the window of her son's flat, she one morning saw a dozen or fifteen tiny forms, which at first she thought to be some sort of enlarged rat, crawl out of the base of an old advertisement column which still stands on the pavement of the street in which her son lives. These children swarm night by night into crevices such as this, and remain the most trying of all the things which a mother has still to see upon visiting Russia.

Mrs. X did develop a certain amount of indignation, as much as the dear old lady could contain, over the Five Day Week, which was in operation about the time of her visit, although I understand that it has since been abandoned. She saw the horrors of the Five Day Week from the family point of view. It was to her nothing but another phase of the dastardly attempt to eradicate the family idea from the Russian mentality. A little household next door to her son's was literally broken to bits, deliberately, as Mrs. X thinks, for the father had his day off on Sunday, the mother on Wednesday, and the children's holiday from school was, by order, Monday. Mrs. X was inclined to be sceptical about the attack on the Churches. It was distressing to find favourite places of worship turned into clubs and cinemas, and to see others, although left free for their divine purposes, smothered with placards proclaiming the non-existence of God. She does not believe that God can be abolished in that way, and rather takes the view that the reaction is in favour of the Churches.

The old lady laughed to me about the farce of visits from foreigners, and the arrangements made to hoodwink and deceive them. She claims that her son knows, from his official work, a good deal about this. There are in Moscow and in Leningrad official guides retained in the service of the Government for the sole purpose of escorting and directing foreigners who secure Government permission to enter Russian territory. These guides learn

their story by rote and tell it word for word much in the manner of the gentleman who talks through a megaphone from the front seat of a char-a-banc in any leading European city. Their orders and method and directions are complete, specific, and minutely detailed. Not only are sentences given them to learn, but they have to pass examinations on the way to approach every street and every building. The most perfect organisation exists for the edification of foreigners who would see the Bolshevik factories, for there are factories in Russia, although all of them work at a loss. The official guide has a list. Factories are organised or communised by numbers, and the visitor being offered the list is bamboozled into the impression that he is free to choose his factory. On the morning when some party of foreigners proposes to inspect a factory, a dinner with a menu card conspicuously labelled "Three Kopecks" is sent to a selected factory, generally No. 28. A hundred Communist workpeople, kept ready for the purpose, are drafted to factory 28 to eat the dinner which is supposed to be obtainable for three kopecks. The visitor, the night before, is then shown a list of factories and may by chance select No. 15. No. 28 is, or this is Mrs. X's story, telephoned to alter its numbers to fifteen. The foreigner admires the wonderful rationalisation of Russian industry and the order which requires everything to be numbered. On arrival at factory 28, the number 15 appears everywhere. The canteen is inspected. The Communists eat the dinner and

look as pleasant about it as any Communist can. The machinery for the most part is not working, a fact which does not disturb the mind of the visitor, for is it not the dinner hour? Mrs. X asked me with a twinkle in her eye to cross-examine friends of mine who thought they had examined Russian industries and see how many of them talked about a factory where they made goloshes. Having since applied that simple test, I am bound to say that I think rather more of Mrs. X's incredible story of the Russian factories than I did when she first told it to me. But a sense of humour fails to help even an old philosopher like Mrs. X when she comes to talk of day-by-day life in Russia. The first rule for everybody is to talk as little as possible. Never exchange a word with a stranger. Never express an opinion except in the most carefully guarded innermost family circle. Every Russian has what we should call a passport. He is docketed. He must be known to the police. And the natural aim and object of every Russian is to keep or obtain a clean record from the Communist point of view. This passport, on which the most absurd details are entered, goes a long way to explain the break up of families and the horrors of family espionage, which are all too common in Russia to-day. A boy or a girl will be arrested upon some trivial excuse invented for the purpose of bringing about an arrest. There is no pretence, no need for any pretence, of justification. The child is examined by third degree methods and is told, in the language of Bumble, " Not guilty,

but don't let me catch you doing it again." He is released without a mark on his passport, on condition that he promises to inform the Ogpu if mother goes to church or if father buys a bit of butter in addition to his ration or expresses discontent with some official arrangement. It often happens that the child, at first in terror and afterwards from the simplest desire for self-preservation, will earn a good mark on his passport by pretending to find some fault at home on which the Ogpu can found an excuse for further terror. Before leaving Leningrad, the old lady was summoned to appear before an official of the Ogpu. She had a very polite chat with him. He desired, or so he said, in her own interest, to call her attention to one or two little matters. He had no power over her, for she was a foreigner, and she was therefore perfectly safe and free from danger in Russia. But he had power over her son and his family, and if it ever came to his ears that she had spoken ill of Russia beyond the borders, or had divulged any of the difficulties of life that she might have noticed, then he would see to it that her son and her grandchildren were made to square the account.

After a long afternoon's talk, the old lady became, to me, a little more human. She began to cry. She had been very glad to see her son once more before she died, but, and this was the cause of the tears, she was still more glad to get out of Russia again. She could not tell me why people stood this sort of thing, except that the Russians will stand anything. She wanted, however, to give

the devil his due. The Russians were building a garden city ; she had seen the attempt. She thought they were genuine in their effort to work a system of special attention to mothers, although she found it a little difficult to be happy about the prevalence of motherhood without regard to marriage. She had absolutely no views as to whether the Bolsheviks were a set of murderous rascals or the high-minded missionaries of a new religion. That question did not concern her at all. She was too old to understand it. It was for others who understood all these new-fangled ideas in the world to work that out. They were no proper questions for an old woman of 75. All she knew was that, be they rascals or be they missionaries, the result in the life of the people of Russia, ever since they started and right down to this moment, has been unqualified disaster.

Evidence culled from émigrés must always be weak, but in the border States there exists a class of émigré whose evidence is of rather more value than that of the average Russian refugee to be found scattered about Europe. These are English people previously settled in Russia, many of them as professors and teachers, others in various professional capacities, who, finding the Revolution impossible, have been able, poor wretches, to make their way as far as one of the independent States. The sacrifice of the Englishman who goes abroad, or even to our own colonies, is not appreciated to the full by those of us who stop at home. A few years away from England is sufficient

in most cases to destroy the personal ties and connections on which the rest of us depend for our existence. Our relations, our friends, our club and business acquaintances, become matters of course, and, unless we deliberately pause to consider what they mean to us, we are inclined to forget how difficult life would be without them. To us who live in the old country, it is hard to understand what a very strange land it is to those who are without numerous daily personal contacts. There is no more lonely place, for instance, in any desert in the world, than the most crowded part of London. So it comes about, when a young man sets out full of hope to make a reputation in Cape Town or Calcutta or Moscow, he loses, as part of the price of his success, most of the possibilities of life at home. Many of us are often guilty of impatience with the bore and the clown who has nothing better to talk about than the Indian Civil Service or his experiences in the Diplomatic Corps in Mexico or on the River Plate. It is hard for us to understand how these people, faithful servants of their country and the Empire, yearn for all the valuable little things that they have perforce thrown away when they volunteered for prolonged service abroad. So you will find in Helsingfors, in Tallin, in Riga, and indeed all over that part of the world, derelict English men and women who established positions for themselves in the Russian Empire, who have no connections at home, and between the want of money and friends, and, worst of all, youth, are constrained

to settle down in some humble position in one of the Baltic States. The Universities are full of them. They crop up at bank counters, hotel cash desks, and in odd jobs teaching such subjects as English and music. Their views about Russia are worth having. They know of the terrors of the Czarist rêgime. They understand, as nobody else can, the slow movement towards democracy which ended in the temporary triumph of Kerensky, and they are full of vivid personal recollections of the early days of Lenin's reign. The first thing that most of these people talk to you about—and none of them, so far as I know, are newspaper people—is the absence of a free Press. I found it rather gratifying, as a newspaper man, to come across a lot of laymen who had learned by personal experience the value of the Press. Several of them had in the past been afflicted with the English weakness of writing to the newspapers, and had been contributors to the Czarist Press, which, notwithstanding a certain amount of censorship, was still free to print conflicting views and individual opinions. These people are all avid readers of the Bolshevik Press. With one accord and complete unanimity, they tell you how the Bolsheviks, day by day, convict themselves in their own official papers, and, to make the story worse and show how complete is the ruin and degradation of Russia, they point out how the boasting of Communist terrorism and the deliberate advertising of its injustices and its murders proves without room for the shadow of a doubt the state

of abject slavery into which the Russian people have been driven. Slavery is properly defined as a condition in which a person or a people have lost the power of resistance, and that definition is justified by the present position in Russia. These European émigrés are a hopeless crowd. They see no way out. They tell you that the Russians have always had so little liberty that it counts for very little amongst them. They are the natural raw material for the slave-driver, and, or so these fellow-countrymen of mine seem to think, it is perfectly easy for a small gang with a few guns to conquer, to hold, and to enslave them. These English émigrés do not voice the hopes and aspirations that one will hear, say, in the Russian colony in Paris. They do not look to a great invasion which will be supported by a majority of the Russian people and end the Bolshevik tyranny. They tell you that the thing must run its course, that it must be left alone, and that when, as must happen, there is not enough food to feed the gunmen, then their numbers will dwindle. The gunmen live by a system of terror, admitting into the administration of that system just as many people as they can keep going with a few of the luxuries of life that remain in this unfortunate country.

All these English émigrés talk with sorrow of friends left in Russia, and they all tell you that they have cut off connection with those friends. The unanimity on this point is quite remarkable. The conviction among them is firmly planted that a communication of any kind from them to some

Russian means disaster to the latter. I will not burden the reader with more evidence of a kind he can read for himself day by day in the newspapers. The only way to raise a smile (a laugh is out of the question in the present-day atmosphere of Riga) from any of these exiled English, is to talk of Bolshevik education, or the Communist enthusiasm for art or the theatre. These people pity us for our ignorance. They say that these stories are only possible because we knew nothing of pre-war Russia. It is true that the Bolsheviks have not done quite so much damage to drama or to music as to the more material things of life, but the damage is there all the same.

CHAPTER VIII

GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE

Russia and Bolshevism are almost synonymous with us, but that is the merest accident. Lenin was smuggled into Russia by the German military command who would, no doubt, have dropped him with even greater pleasure on our island or imposed him on France. It happened that the circumstances of Russia in the early part of 1917 appeared favourable, and for once the psychology of the German propagandists proved to be good. There is absolutely no connection in theory or in thought between Russia and Bolshevism. The unfortunate Russians are the victims, not the authors nor even the followers of Bolshevism. The point so often stressed in these pages is seen very clearly in this connection. The Communists, all the way from Karl Marx to Stalin, have been at pains to disown any national feeling or any territorial limitations. Russia and the Russian people are merely materials on which these craftsmen work, just as the artist works upon a lump of clay.

In considering the factors which brought the Great War to an end, most of the writers on the subject are prepared to give first importance to President Wilson's insistence upon the difference between the German Government and the German people. When once that difference was clearly seen, was established in the minds of the Allies, and reflected in the thoughts of the Germans, the rapid end of the war was assured. Similarly,

when the world understands that the Bolsheviks have nothing whatever to do with Russia, apart from the affliction that they bring to that unfortunate country; when it is realised that Communism is a world movement or nothing—then the beginning of the end of this great catastrophe will have been reached.

The argument can, by good fortune, be built up entirely from the words and documents of the Bolsheviks themselves. Karl Marx made it clear in his historic Communist Manifesto. Indeed, it is greatly to the credit of these revolutionary missionaries that they never fail to make clear all that there is to be said against them.

"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims," said Karl Marx. "They openly declare that their ends can only be obtained by the forcible overthrow of the existing social order. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Proletarians of all lands, unite!" As the ambiguity of this language might leave some of its readers with an element of doubt, *The A B C of Communism*, published by the Communist Party of Great Britain, reiterates and emphasises the point.

"The Communist revolution can be victorious only as a world revolution. If a state of affairs arose in which one country was ruled by the working class, while in other countries the working class, not from fear but from conviction, remained submissive to capital, in the end the great robber States would crush the workers' State of the first country" (p. 138).

And later on, to leave no doubt in the mind of anyone, we are told :

"Complete mutual trust, a brotherly alliance, united revolutionary action against world capitalism—these alone can bring victory to the working class. THE WORKERS' COMMUNIST MOVEMENT CAN CONQUER ONLY AS AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT" (p. 139).

Italics as a means of emphasis are discarded as inadequate by the authors of this authoritative volume, and hence the use of capital letters for the last sentence quoted above.

As Sir Bernard Pares has so often pointed out, the Government which is now represented in palatial premises in the West End of London makes no use of the word Russia, and we do an unwitting injustice when in our ordinary conversation we refer to the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics as "Russia." When Lenin found himself in the saddle in Moscow, one of the very first points that he made was the international character of his authority and his mission. The Communist Party programme adopted on March 18th, 1919, tells us that : "The development of the revolution in Germany and Austria-Hungary, the growth of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat in all advanced lands, the spread of the Soviet form of that movement . . . these things combined to show that the era of the world-wide proletarian Communist revolution had begun."

The skilful use of the word "proletariat" to cloak the most autocratic form of despotism known

to history is a feather in the cap of these people. The way in which we have accepted the proletarian idea, notwithstanding all the evidence of its complete hollowness, reflects no credit upon the care and intelligence which we have devoted to a study of the subject. Not only is there a complete absence of any of the workings of the representative principle in the Government of Russia as it exists to-day, but the Communists have been at pains to make this point perfectly and absolutely clear to those who will take the trouble to enquire. But enquiry in these days is not one of our strong characteristics, unless we have the good fortune to get on the Government salary list and to be occupied in the modern form of research and enquiry which is one of the ways in which we build up an expensive bureaucracy. Referring again to *The A B C of Communism*, we find the democratic principle openly flouted. Paragraph 51 is devoted to parliamentarism and the Soviet system, and, after a grossly untrue picture of the workings of an elective system of government, it goes on to say:

> " Such is the state of affairs in a bourgeois democratic republic under parliamentarism. It is very different in the Soviet Republic. Here the parasites—the traders and the factory owners, the prelates and the landlords, the military officers and the rich peasants—have no right to the vote. They can neither elect nor be elected. On the other hand, the exercise of the franchise by the workers and the poor peasants is simple and easy " (p. 181).

Simple and easy, perhaps, for the dictators in Moscow, but not quite so easy for the peasants who

are now the victims of the Five Year Plan. The farce of the local soviet in the little village, when it started, included the peasant. That was before the squire and the landlord had been effectually destroyed. Now the time has come when these same peasants find themselves branded as parasites if they have had the energy and wisdom to breed more than two cows. The simplicity and the ease referred to in this official document take the form of an edict from the central authority excluding these people, on the grounds of their riches, from such remnants of participation in matters of government as remain to the village soviet.

It will be remembered that the proletarian revolution was floated upon the idea that the soldiers and sailors and workers were to form committees and councils and rid themselves of the despotism of their officers. That was a typical piece of Lenin's chicanery, and he found himself strong enough even as early as 1919, at the Eighth Party Congress already referred to, to discard almost without apology this trick which he used to get into power. Under paragraph 7 of the section of the Programme devoted to military affairs we are told that : " The demand for the election of officers, which had great importance as a matter of principle in relation to the bourgeois army whose commanders were especially trained as an apparatus for the class subjugation of the common soldiers . . . ceases to have any significance as a matter of principle in relation to the class army of the workers and peasants." And then, as it were

to sugar the pill, it is added: "A possible combination of election with appointment from above may be expedient for the revolutionary class army simply on practical grounds. Whether this is so or not depends upon the cultural level of the military units. . . ."

The idea that the proletariat had anything to do with the dictatorship lasted rather longer in the factory than in the army, and it was not until 1929 that Stalin found himself strong enough to declare that all the nonsense about government by the workers must go, and that each factory must be managed by a despotism. There was at one time, indeed there still is to some extent, a sort of pretence that the proletariat were the governing class. It will be noted how the word proletarian is always so defined as to permit of its interpretation to suit the circumstances of the revolution at any particular time and in any particular place. It always means the lowest, and as the upper strata of society are gradually demolished, the definition of "proletarian" applies more exclusively to an ever lower class. "The industrial urban proletariat, comprising that portion of the toiling masses which is most highly concentrated, most united, most enlightened, and most perfectly tempered for the struggle, must be the leader in all revolutions." (Programme of the Communist Party, p. 382, *The A B C.*) It will be seen how numerous are the qualifications and how easy it is for any local despot to disenfranchise any body or any class at his will.

In talking about Russia in that easy-going, tolerant way which is perhaps one of the best of our characteristics at the moment—although there are times when one sighs for a little of the old enthusiasm and fire—we incline to a disbelief in the tales of persecution, murder, and horror which reach us day by day through the agency of émigrés and other interested channels. But so sober a document as the official volume from which I am quoting justifies up to the hilt and over and over again the very worst that can be imagined.

" For the realisation of the Communist system the proletariat must have all authority and all power in its hands. The proletariat cannot overthrow the old world unless it has power in its hands, unless for a time it becomes the ruling class. Manifestly the bourgeoisie will not abandon its position without a fight. For the bourgeoisie, Communism signifies the loss of its former power, the loss of its ' freedom ' to extort blood and sweat from the workers ; the loss of its right to rent, interest, and profit. Consequently the Communist revolution of the proletariat, the Communist transformation of society, is fiercely resisted by the exploiters. It follows that the principal task of the workers' Government is to crush this opposition ruthlessly. Precisely because the opposition will inevitably be so embittered, it is necessary that the workers' authority, the proletarian rule, shall take the form of a dictatorship. Now ' dictatorship ' signifies very strict methods of government and a resolute crushing of enemies. It is obvious that in such a

state of affairs there can be no talk of ' freedom ' for everyone. The dictatorship of the proletariat is incompatible with freedom for the bourgeoisie. This is the very reason why the dictatorship of the proletariat is needed : to deprive the bourgeoisie of freedom ; to bind it hand and foot ; to make it impossible for it to carry on a struggle against the revolutionary proletariat. The more vigorous the resistance of the bourgeoisie, the more desperate the mobilisation of its forces, the more threatening its attitude, the sterner and harsher must be the proletarian dictatorship. In extreme cases the workers' Government must not hesitate to use the method of the terror." (*The A B C of Communism*, pp. 79–80.) And then on the next page, in case the above should have left any room for doubt, we are told : " Why, indeed, do we need the dictatorship ? . . . we need it that we may crush the enemies of the proletariat *by force*. Quite openly we say, by force."

The very best that can be said by those who would pretend that there is a shred of the representative principle in Communism is that the rules and regulations leave it open for the Government and the bureaucracy to confer a limited sort of franchise from time to time on those who are low enough for their purposes. If we care to assume that some of these people are honestly trying to do good as they see it, we cannot support their actions on the ground that there is anything representative about them. The representative principle for which we have struggled for ten centuries is

openly flouted. When it is thought wise for something to be done in the name of a district soviet, then the pronouncements, indeed the rules and regulations, make it perfectly clear that anyone who has given evidence of the possession of sufficient brains to put himself up an inch in a better position than his fellows is proscribed, disenfranchised, and outlawed. It is as if the British Parliament were to derive its authority from the vote of the inhabitants of the Thames Embankment after midnight, and boast of its prestige on that ground.

Having disposed of the misapprehension that any representative authority exists even in the smallest of the village soviets, it seems hardly worth while to examine the Soviet system as a whole, as a working system of government. But if we can conceive of a time when Communism, in pursuance of some new political policy, should grant universal suffrage and give to all the villagers the right to vote in the village soviet, we should still be a very long way from anything that the English would recognise as a democratic system. *The A B C of Communism* tells us all about it. The village soviet elects delegates to a county soviet. That body chooses from amongst its number delegates to constitute a district soviet. From all the district soviets regional bodies are elected, and finally we get up by this nomination process to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and the Central Executive Committee of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, which, we

are supposed to understand, by some curious coincidence, happens to have almost the same personnel as the Executive Committee of the Third International. It is as if we were to alter our methods of election for a public authority in this country and go back to the practice which prevailed in London in the time of the old Metropolitan Board of Works.

If the parish councils were each to nominate one or two members to form the rural district councils and urban district councils, these nominated bodies would, in their turn, nominate some of their members for the county councils, the nominated, thrice-removed county councils then proceeding to pick from among their number appropriate persons to sit in Imperial Parliament, it is easy to see how in any such system the business of government would become the monopoly of a very small class of irresponsible people. If, to make the parallel complete, we go back to the beginning and restrict the voting for the parish council to those in receipt of poor law relief or of wages under 30*s.* a week, we should make sure that the process of government was absolutely free, right from the start, of any taint of interference from experience or understanding. But whether we do this or not, it is not difficult to realise how such a system, even in our country, would place the rest of us firmly and permanently in the hands of any adventurer who by some skilful coup got himself into the central position.

The carefully guarded elasticity in the meaning

of the word " proletariat " is designed and, as we know, operates, to place all power in the hands of anybody in a village or a district who happens for the moment to be an accredited representative of the central authority. These Communists do not want to be representative. They flout the representative principle. They deny the virtue of democracy, and are at no pains to hide the ugly truth that they govern as despots determined to impose their will and their way. They do not even look for a gradual return to democracy. They argue that by the abolition of private property, of the family, of religion, of independent thought, and of everything else that is of value to the rest of us, they will create a generation of men and women who are completely alike in their wants and their habits and who will be free of all those differences which divide up members of older forms of civilisation, because of the absence of all those questions and difficulties that arise out of those older forms ——surely a wild, mad, diabolical dream, offering at its consummation no sort of life worth having to anybody. If the workers of other lands, who are tempted by reason of their trials and troubles to favour Communism as a way out and who think of exploitation, as most of them do, as a game of which they might be the players instead of the pieces, would only take the trouble to read *The A B C of Communism*, they would find that all the reasons which attract them to this theory find no place either in its written exposition or in its practical application. In the pamphlet on the Five

Year Plan, recently issued by the Communist Party of Great Britain, a proud boast is to be found that at the expiry of the glorious five years, the proletariat will number 15,000,000. It is not explained whether the other 125,000,000 Russians will by that time have been murdered or deported, but no hope is held out, even in the optimistic figuring of the Moscow officials, that the precious proletariat will develop in size beyond a mere 15,000,000. What is there left, then, of the representative principle in a system which, at the end of five years' work designed to achieve perfection, offers its advantages to no more than 11 per cent. of the population? The whole thing is surely so thoroughly devoid of sense as to demonstrate the wisdom of the Moscow Government in maintaining a strict censorship over the information which is allowed to the Russian people. These poor folk are still encouraged to imagine that the revolution is progressing in other countries, and they have, as we know, recently been invited to tighten their belts for a final five year effort, while the rest of the world, following on British recognition, falls into line with the glorious ideas of Karl Marx. In this way we also begin to understand the care which is exercised to guard the Russian frontier, keep Russians out of the rest of the world, and keep the rest of the world out of Russia. This is substantially true notwithstanding the present show of an invitation to visit Russia. In the organised attempt to develop a tourist business in Russia, the Bolsheviks have created by now a

sufficiently expert trained staff of guides to show foreigners German-built hospitals, sham factories, and a few model dwellings, and they feel strong enough, having regard to the success of the few conducted tours which so far have been arranged, to extend the operations of their bamboozling department. I gave myself the other day, by way of exercise and in order to check and confirm my recent impressions in the Baltic States, the task of reading first *The A B C of Communism* and next the voluminous report of the first trade union delegation to Russia. A party of elderly and respected trade unionists spent five weeks during which they travelled thousands of miles, filled their pockets with official estimates of what the Bolsheviks told them they hoped to do, and came back and published a massive volume. That document stands out, notwithstanding the efforts of these good people to whitewash the Bolsheviks, as the most conclusive evidence of the very worst that can be thought or said about this ghastly human tragedy.

This show of a welcome to Russia is exposed when one remembers that no foreigner who can speak the language or has any pretence to be competent to understand such things as a traveller can observe is allowed to cross the border. Stephen Graham, Paul Schaeffer of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, and any others equally qualified are resolutely barred admission.

There is some hope that the last desperate throw of Stalin, the attempt to suppress the peasantry,

the backbone of Russia, the forcing of millions of hard-working peasants into penury, and the confiscation of their land may convince the world of this all-important point, that Communism and Russia have nothing in common. When we once begin to see that we are dealing with an attempt to revolutionise the world, which has nothing, except by accident, to do with the territory of the old Russian Empire, we may find our hearts opening to the suffering Russian, and when the spirit of sympathy goes out from the rest of Europe to the oppressed, the days of the dictatorship will begin to be numbered. So long as there remain amongst us, because we are democrats, even a suspicion that there is anything Russian about Communism, we shall be content to apply the satisfying argument that after all the Russians must be left to look after their own affairs.

There will then remain only the practical question, and we shall have to deal with the problem as to how best to clear up this mess. We shall be told, for instance, that whether they are good or bad, the Communists are the *de facto* Government of Russia and no alternative appears to be in sight. It will be argued that in these circumstances we must do what we can to convert the Communists to reason and trust to practical experience and the evolutionary process of common sense gradually to bring them to see the error of their ways. Stalin's Five Year Plan seems to have disposed of this line of argument. Rather it would seem that the only hope is for some sort of *coup d'état* which

will depose the present gang of despots and open the doors of Russia for the flow of charity and assistance which the rest of the world will be ready, willing and anxious to provide. Such a *coup d'état* must come from within Russia itself, and will come swiftly and surely when the oppressed Russians know that the rest of the world has separated them from the antics of the Communists, who, by the accident of the whim of the German high command, happen to have got going in Russia instead of elsewhere.

CHAPTER IX

RECOGNITION

THE presence of a Soviet Ambassador in London with his office and all its departments has no doubt its conveniences. There are passports and other similar formalities which can be more easily arranged with a direct representative than through the agency of some other government. It is, for instance, usual for friendly governments, through their respective ambassadors, to help one another in the detection of crime and the capture of those criminals who succeed in passing from one country to another. Quite a number of technical conveniences undoubtedly follow upon recognition. Most of them, however, are concerned with post-war abuses which one day or another will disappear. The world cannot always, for instance, have its intercourse hampered by the stupidity of passports, and some of these diplomatic aids, such as the capturing of criminals, cannot be resorted to in the case of Russia, because there is no common basis in the way of a criminal code. Leaving behind mere details such as this, and considering the deeper, bigger questions which are involved in the process of recognition, the finger of doubt, in my opinion, points very insistently at the wisdom of having anything whatever to do with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. In recognising Russia, it is beyond dispute that we are doing something new, something that has a very different character from the act of recognition when applied to any other country. To begin with, diplomacy and

diplomatic relations are founded upon a territorial basis. They are matters of country, race, people, and geographical boundaries. We talk in our loose way about " Russia," but in theory, as we have seen, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics has very little to do with Russia. It is forgotten that these people hardly ever use the word "Russia" themselves. No paragraph in their constitution, or phrase in their statement of principles, bothers about Russia. They claim to be the representatives of the proletariat ; they talk for the workers of the world ; they boast of their mission on behalf of a class, and emphatically deny national, territorial, racial, or local interest of any kind. They maintain an open invitation to the proletariat of the world to seize power in any country in the world, and to join up with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Lenin stated in the most definite terms that : " We are doomed to perish unless revolution breaks out very shortly in other countries," and every disciple of Lenin has repeated that truth. The Soviet Ambassador in London, claims, in fact not only to represent Soviet Russia, but also to act for the " Workers of the World."

The principles governing recognition between nations and the exchange of courtesies between sovereign peoples are really quite simple. First of all, they recognise the right of any people to govern themselves in their own way. Instances are numerous where our own and other Governments have deliberately declined to concern themselves with internal abuses in other friendly countries, on

the simple ground that other people know best what is best for themselves. But then, in all these cases, the other people are concerned with themselves and not with us. The Russian case is unique in this respect, that the Bolsheviks want to be recognised not that they may be left alone to govern themselves, but that they may be freer to arrange the government of the world at large. In discussing recognition, all questions of error or wrong on the other side of the Russian border are irrelevant. Years ago, after some delay, we recognised the regicides of Serbia, and although there was a good deal of feeling about it at the time, we received the representatives of the monarch who held his kingdom as a direct result of deliberate murder. Those representatives did not come here with any designs upon our own habits and customs. We recognised Persia, and entertained with pomp and ceremony the Shah who kept a staff of executioners to dispose of unreasonable persons who stood in the way of his quasi-matrimonial whims and fancies. The fact that the Shah of Persia practised to the point of the highest technical perfection the mixed arts of love and murder did not prevent us from giving him a Guildhall banquet and receiving his ambassador. We recognise and receive as friends and equals Italians who deny most of the principles upon which we ourselves think political and intellectual freedom to be founded. Similarly, inside our own borders, and inside any civilised community, we find recognition and toleration accorded to all sorts of people

holding all sorts of views. Communists, Catholics, Jacobites, Jews, believers in the flat earth theory, fundamentalists—all of them are welcomed and free to enjoy the most intimate intercourse with the rest of us, because that is the way in which civilisation prospers. Imagine, however, what our attitude would be to any of these people if they asked of society as a whole more than the liberty to do what they liked with their own. If the Jew, for example, were to say that the world is impossible until everybody becomes a Jew, and to declare that he would go on murdering until that object was achieved, there would be no question of recognition or toleration. He would simply be locked up. The Bolsheviks do not merely claim the right to think for themselves, they assert their determination to think for everybody. They are quite logical, quite frank, quite open. In a paradoxical sort of way of their own, they are quite honest. They make no secret of their belief that unless they succeed in murdering everybody who declines to accept Communism, their mission will fail and their Union of Socialist Soviet Republics will come to an end. Every line of responsible writing on Communism and Bolshevism makes it clear that there is no middle course, no half-way house. In this way there develops for the world in general and for England in particular a serious problem, a grave new difficulty. We have been bred in the atmosphere of freedom and toleration. We recognise and allow everything and everybody. We take great pride in the spectacle of some insane advocate

of an outrageous cause standing undisturbed on the plinth of Nelson's column or on the grass in Hyde Park and expounding to all and sundry his peculiar views. It remains, however, to consider whether this liberty, this freedom, can apply to a crusade which differs in all essentials from any other crusade known in human experience. All other missions always recognise the possibility of non-acceptance. They all leave room for unbelievers. Even where the price of unbelief is eternal damnation, the unfortunate victim is merely warned and left free to work out his own perdition. But Bolshevism, which at its best must be regarded as in the nature of a religion, has this characteristic which is quite new even in the realm of religion, that the salvation of the believer himself depends upon the extermination of all unbelief. The spacious realm of ideas has never hitherto contained anything so formidable, so audacious, so devoid of accommodation or of the possibility of compromise.

It is argued that recognition will give to the Russians the opportunity for touch with the outside world, and to the rest of us the opportunity of touch with Russia, and thus there will be a gradual weaning of the Bolsheviks from their ideas and ways. That argument will not bear examination. Within an hour of presenting his credentials at St. James's Palace, the Russian Ambassador issued a statement to the Press. That part of the argument which is concerned with the touch of Russia with us is therefore good. That statement,

while it went quite a good way, for Bolshevism, towards politeness and manners, still contained a reference to the Bolshevik faith and a word of encouragement for every revolutionary within our borders. Every publication in the land, from the *Daily Worker* to the *National Review*, was free to print and comment upon it. We, on the other hand, on going to Moscow have no such opportunity. We are quite unable to get into touch with any Russians who may entertain kindly thoughts about our economic and social system. We have no friendly Press at our disposal, no *Daily Herald* to plead our cause. Our only medium is the official Bolshevik newspaper, and we are limited by the admitted fact that no word sees the light in print unless it passes the Bolshevik censor. While the Russians are able to boast about their mission against society in England, and, what is more important, are able to flood Russia with news of the triumph of that mission through recognition, there is not a suggestion that we or anybody else may be permitted to comment on their affairs or put our side of the case on the other side of the Russian frontier. The theory that through recognition we have a chance to win the Bolsheviks slowly back to reason is founded on optimism rather than experience, and it is quite clear that the Soviets get the best of the bargain. Their aim and object of world revolution is facilitated, while anything that the world may have to say on the other side of the matter is checked and thwarted. It is admitted that recognition of the Soviets by the

British Government is a source of encouragement to revolutionaries of every class here and elsewhere, and some of us may be glad enough to give encouragement to revolutionaries. But none of us can deny the one-sided character of the arrangement. While revolutionaries here, in India, in China, and in every other part of the world have an extra feather in their cap by reason of the presence of the Soviet Ambassador in London, that same fact is made a further reason for oppressing the counter-part of the revolutionaries, known as counter-revolutionaries, in Russia. Recognition from the Bolsheviks' point of view means undoubtedly " Heads we win, tails you lose."

Recognition by foreign Governments is quite unnecessary to the practice of Bolshevism in Russia. The case for recognition in London, in so far as it finds any support at all, is based upon our own need for Russian trade. For there is no case on the other side. If these people mean what they say—and there is a good deal of evidence to that effect—that they want no riches and desire the abolition of property ; then the life which they hold up as the ideal is obtainable in Russia without any outside aid. The present carefully organised war on the peasantry, the outlawry and murder of kulaks, the edict that no Russian must own more than two cows—all expose the notion that recognition is in any way essential to the quiet and orderly development within Russia itself of the sort of life which the Bolsheviks regard as the ideal. Trade is essentially a luxury business. Its character and history

and method are simple and well understood. It has never, from the earliest days, done anything other than provide something better for a few at a time. It consists of a multiplicity of efforts by individuals to produce something which does not now exist and by degrees make that something available for all. Bolshevism denies the usefulness or the equity of the process. It is saying in thousands of villages at this very moment that the man who would strive to possess an extra cow is an enemy to society. We get, of course, a lot of ignorant talk by politicians who do not know the shape of a spade about the need for tractors, and the desire for machinery; we get spectacular programmes which form the subject of interesting conversations about reorganising this, that or the other. The public memory is so short that it forgets the day, not very distant, when a ministerial effort of our own dumped tractors in ditches all over our own little country. Yet it is calmly assumed that the innocent Russian peasant (who, if you please, is not to be allowed to own more than two cows) will be able to deal with the tractor when the magneto fails to function.

The more the matter is examined, the more obvious it becomes that part of the force behind the big drive for recognition is the desire of a few hundred bureaucrats to live in luxury in foreign lands. The way these Bolsheviks couple the most luxurious living in their foreign legations with the hardest form of poverty in their home life is one of the novelties of latter day affairs. When

the argument is that recognition helps trade, we divide ourselves into two camps at once. The non-traders applaud and the tradesmen and merchants sadly sigh. Discussions about trade and industry are always difficult to a man who is engaged in these pursuits. The business classes listen with respect to speeches, read long newspaper articles explaining the course of affairs, the lines upon which economic development can be achieved, and are for the most part left wondering what it is all about. So little public discussion discloses any acquaintance with the hard, practical, day by day difficulties of earning a living or supplying the needs of the people. There is, of course, a certain amount of trade which is done by governments—bridges, harbours, railways, and public works generally. But we so often forget that a bridge or a harbour is the most useless thing in the world unless there exists a large class of small people, carrying on small bits of trade which in the mass make up the packages and parcels that are handled by the harbours and the railways and the bridges. When thinking of trade, we are too prone to take our views from those who talk airily about raw materials and big industries, whereas we ought surely rather to cast our minds down Oxford Street or the Rue de Rivoli. The world possesses thousands of miles of shops with millions of windows, displaying myriads of articles exposed for sale by way of trade. If people would only take a walk through a shopping centre, examine these windows and search about for simple trading

articles which would fit in with their political or economic views, politics and economics would assume a practical character which to-day is all too rare. The trade of the world is not in bridges and harbours and railways. It consists of the herrings, furs, motor cars, biscuits, knives, hats, boots and shoes, ornaments and comforts, and luxuries generally which make use of these railways and other facilities.

A letter recently appeared in *The Times* from a man of experience in the herring business. It contained more wisdom about trade than most political utterances. Few people, when discussing the negotiations between some English organisation and Moscow for the revival of industry can bring their minds down to so little a fact as the necessity for plenty of black bread to eat with a herring, and the impossibility of a herring trade without the presence of an active bread trade. Here is the letter :

"RUSSIAN MARKET FOR HERRINGS

"To the Editor of *The Times*

"Sir,—It is to be feared that the optimists placing their confidence in the renewal of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia as a means for the revival of the herring trade are working under a great delusion, based on the lack of knowledge of present trade conditions there.

"The herring trade in Russia was built up entirely by foreign firms residing in Russia, and the leading position was occupied by the English house of Wm. Miller and Co., with their enormous trade organization, own cold stores and experts. Native Russian firms acted only as distributing middlemen

and retailers. All this has been swept away by the Soviets. There are no merchants who would be permitted to build up the lost herring trade in Russia, and the Soviet official at the counter of a co-operative store has no interest in pressing commerce which would only mean for him extra work without his personal benefit.

"The former consumer has also disappeared. Domestic servants formerly to be found in the smallest household, cab and horse lorry drivers, millions of artisans, workmen and transport workers flocking yearly to ports, rivers, and towns during the shipping and building seasons as journeymen have retired to their villages, as there is no work for them, and the village lives on the fruit of the land, with no surplus money for other commodities. The Jewish population of the Western towns, formerly large consumers of herrings, have gone over to the new border States, receiving their supplies via Danzig and Riga. Further, substitutes were found during the War in the Kertch and Astrakhan herrings and dried 'Vobla' and 'Taran,' fish of the carp family abundant in Ural and Siberian rivers but formerly only known locally at the places where they were caught. These and all kinds of freshwater fish formerly eaten only in fresh state have of course not the nutritious value of the herring, but they do not require an outlay in foreign gold currency so precious to the Soviets.

"Above all, the population formerly accustomed to eat the herring raw with plenty of black bread and spring onions or a dish of boiled potatoes and butter for necessary substance cannot use the herring as a meal with the present small bread rations, potatoes, which have become a luxury, or butter at the weight of gold.

"For political reasons some orders may forthcome as a sop on the renewal of diplomatic relations, but a trade extending to anything like the pre-War figure will never be resumed under the existing circumstances and a Soviet trade monopoly.

"I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

"M. Maximoff.

"Upper Norwood, Nov. 27."

We get an altogether wrong impression from

statistics compiled by persons devoid of practical experience.

Recognition is no doubt useful to the Russians if there follows from it a whole series of government credits. Should it be thought desirable that the British taxpayer should pledge his credit to enable the Russian to amass bank balances in London or New York or Berlin, then, of course, recognition is of considerable importance from the Russian point of view. But here again we come across a most curious misapprehension, one that is particularly interesting in view of a good deal that is recommended to us in the name of sound economic practice. We are told by some of our own pseudo-economists that we should aim at a "favourable" trade balance. We are supposed to be in jeopardy as a nation because we export less than we import. We are asked to take the view that economic salvation is only to be assured if we will export wealth at a greater rate than we receive it from abroad. People who so loudly and eloquently recommend this wholly unsound course to us, never take the trouble to remind us, however, that all the delights of this ideal position are actually enjoyed at this moment by the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. No country ever succeeded in acquiring so big or so complete a favourable trade balance. These people squeeze and starve the miserable Russians to export, and their accounts are bulging with just that sort of trade balance which is so loudly recommended to us and to others.

The theory that diplomatic recognition has any real bearing upon the amount of trade that may be done between ourselves and Russia is surely exploded by the experience of America. The United States, ever since the beginning of the Revolution, has done and still does by far the largest proportion of Russian trade, while standing firm and immovable on the question of recognition.

Finally it should be noted how all the hopes built by English traders upon the arrival of the Russian Ambassador in London, have, within a few weeks of his appearance, been dashed to the ground. It now seems that a Trading Agreement is needful and Miss Ellen Wilkinson is employed to move the necessary motion in the House of Commons. In due course, when this instrument is drafted, passed and agreed, some further administrative device will no doubt be found to be lacking, as an excuse to hide the absence of the trade itself.

There remains another point, little discussed, and, while of great public interest, of no bearing on the economic question. When we send an Ambassador to a foreign country, he acquires by international custom some little bit of territory in that country which becomes for the time being part and parcel of the British Empire. The house in which a diplomat lives is, by universal agreement, regarded as part of the territory from which the diplomat comes, and is subject to all the laws and customs of his own country. Thus, the British Embassy in Washington has a complete and

indisputable right to keep a cellar and take any course that seems to it to be good in the matter of drink, notwithstanding the fact that the existence of a bottle of whisky in the house next door is an indictable offence under the American laws. Diplomatic recognition on any other terms is impossible. The diplomats of the world are immune from the jurisdiction of the courts in the countries to which they are accredited. British diplomats all over the world are, by universal agreement, at perfect liberty to do anything inside our diplomatic premises which is lawful in England. Similarly, the Ambassadors of the Argentine or of Siam can conduct themselves inside their own embassies in accordance with the laws of their own countries. Now, the present Russian Government differs from any other government in that it is founded upon murder. It makes no secret of the fact. This unpleasant truth is not one of those undiscussed habits which is suspected and ignored. The murder which is part and parcel of the world revolution is a point of pride with the Bolsheviks. Every day victims of the revolution go to their death in Russia itself, with the approval and applause of every true revolutionary. Human life is a detail which to these people is hardly worth considering when it stands in the way of the cause. In my tour of Scandinavia and the States on the borders of Russia, I had the privilege of many conversations with diplomats, not only our own representatives but those of most of the Governments of Europe,

and with several American ministers. At the time of my tour, the Russian secretary, Bessedovsky, had just escaped with his life from the Russian Embassy in Paris. I do not believe that the whole of the Diplomatic Corps of Europe contains a man who doubts that Bessedovsky would have been murdered if he had remained another hour in the Embassy. If that murder had taken place, no power of any kind exists by virtue of which any European could even complain. The French would have no right to set foot in the Russian Embassy, or to ask for justice against anybody. Bessedovsky could have been shot, dropped into the river or put into a box and sent under diplomatic seals to Russia, and not one word could have been said about the matter by the Governments or the peoples of the rest of Europe. That particular case led my conversation in a score of different diplomatic circles to the general question of murder in Russian Embassies. I noted the words of one foreign minister :

"That people have been shot in the Russian Embassy in Berlin is well known to be the case, although, naturally, no official protest can be made."

I give that sentence only as a sample. It represents the view of the whole of the diplomatic body of Europe. After all, it is logical and natural that people who, in their own country, shoot on suspicion and at sight all and sundry who get in their way, should carry on the good work in those little bits of their own country which come

to them by reason of official recognition abroad. It is, therefore, beyond dispute that in London at this moment the Russians are at liberty to cut the throats of any of their own people, if not of others, in the luxurious surroundings of 40, Grosvenor Square, and that can be done by virtue and within the rules of the bargain made between Mr. Henderson and M. Dovgalevsky. In this respect, the recognition of Russia by any other Power is a stretching, if not an abuse, of diplomatic usance and procedure which is quite unprecedented.

CHAPTER X

TRADE

In a subject so fraught with big human problems such a detail as mere trade is almost beneath mention, and yet a great deal of the argument about Russia is concerned with the possibility of increasing our commerce with the Soviet republics. Most of the talk is, needless to say, by persons who, knowing nothing about trade, fondly imagine that official machinery exists to facilitate commercial operations. It is of course quite possible that the present Russian Government may be able for some time to come to carry on such comparatively small buying and selling as they have accomplished in the past few years, but very few judges of trade, as such, will be found willing to give the title to these transactions. It is very convenient and agreeable to an English manufacturer to receive from an office in London an order for a quantity of articles to be shipped to Russia and also to receive, on due date, a payment for them. But ten years of this sort of thing, which had it been trade would have developed credits, exchanges and expansion on both sides, has, so far, left both parties in a position where there is less confidence than when it began.

Trade can only grow out of freedom, confidence, intercourse, and none of these essentials are to be detected in the Russian position.

A calculation of the total loss of trade at home, in China, and in other places, caused by Russian support of strikes and rebellions, might indeed

show that even the restoration of the pre-war figure between England and Russia would still fail to balance the larger damage done.

It is true that some of our tradesmen have been to Moscow and returned with views about Russian trade, but on close examination, these views are found to be of no more real or permanent value than those of the trade unionists who have also paid brief visits to the Bolshevik parlour.

One of these delegations of traders included an English manufacturer of leather belting, and I propose to examine rather carefully what happened in this particular case.

The manufacturer had an interview with the authorities in Moscow, and was assured that they had ready for him an order for £50,000 worth of leather belting and, further, that the only obstacle to the placing of that order was the absence of official recognition by the Government in London. The good, simple, commercial soul came home with this story, related it to his local chamber of commerce, and on the strength of it is an advocate of official relations between London and Moscow. This man reminds me of any ordinary commercial traveller. I have been one myself and know the temptations. One walks about all day interviewing all sorts of people, calculating prospects of business, and attaching a seriousness to the casual conversation of the prospective buyer to which in very few circumstances it is properly entitled.

I do not profess to be an expert in leather belting, but there are one or two considerations which

come to mind and which, I imagine, are relevant. I find it hard to become enthusiastic about a government office buying £50,000 worth of belting. Somehow it hardly seems the function of a central office and the figure is suspiciously round. What little I know of factory organisation leads me to suppose that belting is among the supplies which are bought by the managers and foremen according to their requirements. For instance, a 4-in. belt will not run efficiently on a 3-in. pulley. A belt which is designed to link together two pulleys at a distance of 5 yards will be of no service in operating pulleys at a greater or lesser distance apart. Belting is an accessory that will not wait. A belt breaks and another must be secured on the instant, or the whole factory stops. Belting is a detail which must not be allowed to delay the operation of valuable machinery or big organisation. Belting, I should imagine, is stuff which must be handy. It would be a little inconvenient if a belt broke at Odessa to send to Moscow for a replacement. Even if we assume that it is possible to concentrate the purchase of the whole of the belting of the whole of the factories in the great Russian continent in a single office in Moscow, we must visualise massive files scheduling innumerable sizes and strengths and sorts of belting, on the instant supply of which depends the running of the whole of the factories of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Thus we must infer from the conversation of our leather friend with the Bolshevik official in Moscow that pending the

recognition by the English Government of the Russian Government, the whole of the manufacturing activities of Russia, whatever they may be worth, are, if not at a standstill, at least suffering grave inconvenience from the absence of £50,000 worth of belting. All the discussion of the matter depends upon the assumption, far too commonly made and responsible for much of our economic trouble, that the supply of this parcel of belting is a matter of importance to the manufacturers of belting, but of no importance whatever to the users of belting. Analysed in this sort of way, the hollowness and stupidity of the suggestion are exposed, or, more likely, the deliberate duplicity and lying of people who simply do not know of what belting consists. If the whole truth could be known, the probability is that the Bolsheviks are buying belting from Germany or Sweden or Czecho-Slovakia, and that there is about as much muddle over belting in Moscow as there was over bacon in England during the war. If that be so, the good faith of the Bolsheviks comes into question, for this £50,000 worth of belting having served its purpose as an argument why Czecho-Slovakia should recognise the Soviet Republics, is now to be transferred to London, leaving Prague with its Soviet Ambassador and gangs of agitators from the Communist International, but without the orders for belting which were an original part of the bargain. Similarly, London having recognised Moscow, and got, if it ever gets, the £50,000 belting order, the same trade will, it is fair to suppose, be offered in Washington,

without regard to the innocent conversation with the English belting merchant or his sweetly simple acceptance of the story.

More of these commercial delegates come back to England and talk of credits. It is surprising how little these business men know of banking and money. They each of them, no doubt, have their periodical interview with their local bank manager and arrange with some success the finances associated with their own weekly wage bills. But they go to Moscow, and because some pleasant-spoken Government official tells them that credits are wanted, they come back home and like gramophones repeat that story without bothering to examine it, or perhaps without any qualifications for understanding it. The Bolsheviks have, for years past, with and without recognition, sent to this country vast quantities of timber, oil, and other commodities, quantities which are well below the pre-war figures but vast nevertheless. On the other side of the account, the Bolsheviks have made sundry purchases from us, very sundry and very few. In the year 1928 they shipped here £21,548,237 worth of materials, in respect of which (and this simple fact does require careful note by people who talk of credits) no less a sum than £21,548,237 sterling was placed to their credit in English banks. In the same year, they bought from us £2,715,987 of English-made goods, and £2,084,762 of foreign and colonial goods purchased through London. In respect, therefore, of these purchases, the sum of £4,800,749 was placed to

their debit in their English bank accounts. There arose in this way, in this one year, a credit balance in favour of the Bolsheviks of nearly £17,000,000, available for any purposes they decide, but most easily available for the purchase of British goods and the provision of employment in this country. Seventeen million pounds in one year. The Bolsheviks have been going for ten years. The balance varies from year to year, but on the whole there has been nearly £150,000,000 in their favour which, during that period, has actually been in the hands of British bankers on their account. In a free market, and there are still elements of freedom in the English market, it is no business of ours to enquire what our suppliers do with the money which we pay them, but when those suppliers come to us and ask for credits, it is right and proper, indeed imperative, that we should have some knowledge of what has happened to the £150,000,000 of our money which has already passed through their hands. Some of it has no doubt been used for the purchase of foreign goods in preference to English goods, and as a free trader I make no objection to that. But as usual in this complicated and many-sided problem there are other considerations. One hears stories of subsidies to strikes, of money paid to Chinese revolutionaries, of support given to subversive political movements in every part of the world. Again I doubt our right to object. We have freely and of our own will bought the timber and the oil from the Russian, the money belongs to him and, being lovers of

freedom, we cannot reasonably complain if he spends it on any form of propaganda which appeals to him. But when he asks us to lend him more, then we are in duty bound to take these facts into consideration. I am also reminded that the Bolshevik legations everywhere are run on a scale of expense which is unprecedented in the whole history of diplomacy. To whichever of the capitals of Europe I care to go, I find the most magnificent of the buildings occupied by the Bolshevik Embassy, the most lavish of the social entertainments paid for by the Bolshevik emissaries, and ten times the staff which is considered necessary for the adequate conduct of the business of diplomacy by any other government in the world. Is it, then, reasonable, that having spent £150,000,000 of our money in riotous political living, these people should then ask us to lend them more with which to carry on a trade with us, particularly as that trade will quite obviously be diverted from some of our neighbours who have made similarly uneconomical bargains, and will certainly be transferred again from us to any other power that will follow our stupid example.

I am, I hope, not unmindful of the importance of Russian trade. That subject, however, is not on the agenda at the present time. All the discussion is merely concerned with the wisdom or otherwise of continuing arrangements which so far from being helpful to trade, are the greatest stumbling block to its revival.

CHAPTER XI

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT

No study such as that on which we are engaged would be complete, unless we take account of the subjective as well as the objective aspect of the matter. A clear understanding of ourselves is necessary to enable us to value more correctly our views and actions on this or any other question. Indeed, the marked and obvious difference between our attitude towards the Russian Revolution and the attitude of any previous generation of Englishmen towards political upheavals abroad does demand that we should pause, question our present frame of mind and examine our own change of outlook. Whereas in the face of catastrophes far less severe, involving far less human suffering and disaster, we have in the past as an English people been almost unanimous, we are divided on the problems raised by Russia. It may perhaps be said of us to-day that we are two peoples. There are those amongst us who can be classed as pre-war, and the remainder who possess only post-war knowledge and mentality. The man who to-day is thirty-five years of age, or under, has very little in common with the man who was thirty-five at the beginning of the Great War. The former's knowledge is limited to a government-ridden world. He left school to be socialised in the army, and he left the army to go into a semi-socialised world. While a soldier he gave all his energies to the State, and now it seems a small and unimportant thing to him that he should sacrifice a mere quarter or even a

half of his income and abilities to the State as a civilian. On the other hand the man who may be described as a pre-war man is living all the time in a world of twice the practical activity, of intense personal responsibility, and of an income tax at a shilling in the pound. He realises the truth, which the post-war man finds it difficult to understand, of Tom Paine's dictum, that " the taxes were not raised to carry on wars but that wars were raised to carry on taxes."

One of the interesting riddles of the present is whether the post-war man will learn from the pre-war man, or whether he will prefer to leave the hard-won and painful truth to be mastered again by still harder methods by unfortunate future generations. In the meantime, however, the post-war man is so addicted to the governing fashion, that the monstrosity of the Russian glorification of the State fails to arouse that indignation and alarm which it has very naturally caused to the pre-war man.

Still other factors enter into an explanation of the absence of the old missionary spirit which in other times would have filled this country with a determination to right the wrong. It must, for instance, be remembered that the post-war world has lost completely the old sense of the value of life. Prior to August, 1914, murder and outrage were still certain producers of righteous indignation and pugnacious redress. The Victorians were roused to fury over some such incident as the whipping of a nigger or the sale of a child. Post-war England

refuses to be interested in the daily murder of innocent people because of their opinions, even though those opinions happen to be of a definitely religious order. It is no easy task for the best of us to realise to the full the complete alteration in values which has overtaken even the oldest of us. The value of human life has depreciated in our estimation much more than the value of gilt-edged securities. We have to go back and search for definite illustration, in order to secure a reliable estimate of this change. I am fully conscious of a considerable alteration in my own estimation of human values, as the following incident will show. Two days after war broke out the City of London was full of rumour and gossip, and amongst other stories I heard that a stockbroker had received news of the death of both his sons in Belgium. That night on my way home I told a neighbour that a friend of mine in the City had lost two sons. This was both his and my first acquaintance with a war casualty, and the horror of it is something very difficult to understand in the year 1930. I went home, failed to settle down to my work, my mind full of this unprecedented tragedy. It was almost unbelievable. Indeed, I firmly hoped that it might prove to be untrue. Two sons of one father actually killed in one war and on the same day! No such calamity had ever befallen the father of a family before. My conscience troubled me. I had told my neighbour that I knew the man in the City upon whom this disaster had fallen, which seemed to make it so much worse. So I put on my coat and

walked round to his house and confessed that I did not know the man, but that I knew somebody who had told me that he knew him and that after all, knowing as we did how unreliable rumour was, I expected the story was probably untrue.

This was less than fifteen years ago. It is the sort of early war experience of which a collection ought to be made with a view to demonstrating to the post-war man the violence of the difference in his knowledge, his outlook, and indeed his whole existence, compared with that of his father or his grandfather. The incident helps to explain why the post-war man will shrug his shoulders when he reads the daily paragraph in *The Times* announcing the shooting of fifteen men without trial on a charge that they were "suspected of counter-revolutionary sympathies." Those whose early manhood was spent amidst corpses on the battlefield can hardly be expected to give to a piece of news like this the same sort of importance that would have been attached to it before 1914. Only in some such way as this can we explain the apathy of the Christian Churches amongst us at the attempt of the Soviet Government to annihilate religion. Never in pre-war history would it have been possible for 15,000 or 20,000 Mennonites to assemble in Moscow to plead for the right to practise the Christian religion, and for three-quarters of them to be dispersed, nobody knows where, while the remainder, being able to establish some sort of claim to German nationality, are sent out of Russia by German authority. Never, I repeat, would it have been possible for any

such thing to have happened while the Christian Churches of the world remained dumb or carried on correspondence between themselves as to the wisdom or otherwise of having views about Russia.

But there is a more serious consideration. This régime of murder is able—so extraordinary is the world into which we have drifted—to claim an ethical side for its operations. It is even possible to find professing ministers of the Christian religion who will openly give support to the Communist experiment, appearing to be able to trace some similarity between the tenets of Christianity and those of Karl Marx. Surely this combination of a new gospel and murder is something original, novel and new. Murders and gospels, it is true, have generally occurred together, as the nettle and the dockleaf in nature grow side by side. Is it not, however, true to say that in past experience murder was always opposed to the Gospel, always against the light? It would even seem as if the quality of a new gospel might be measured directly by the strength of the murderous forces opposed to it. Socrates had to pay the penalty exacted by murder, the ally of reaction, before he could leave to the world the light that has never since failed to shine. Scientific pioneers have everywhere had to face the faggot and the rack and to be treated as the agents of witchcraft, without mentioning the Christians, who throughout the ages had to face such institutions as the present Ogpu in Russia. So, in endeavouring to explain and understand the attitude of the world towards this entirely novel

experiment in terror, we must recognise that the world is an entirely different world from any that we have known before, and that only in this post-war world could this tyranny have come into power and held its own for so long.

Strangely enough, the revolutionary alteration in our mentality is noticeably more marked in this country than in others. The war appears to have had much deadlier consequences for us even than for those countries which were devastated by the actual operations. This would seem to be shown by the fact that Kerensky, carrying on from Paris a brave campaign for moral intervention, is receiving far more support from Continental countries than he is able to secure here. Indeed, his influence here is negligible, if his name is remembered at all.

In this respect it is not pleasant to consider that the historic place of Britain as the moral leader of mankind is not so strong as the pre-war man likes to think it used to be. While France has taken our traditional place as the asylum of the political refugee, Germany is usurping our function as the moral force in Europe, and is at the moment of writing receiving the first batch of Mennonite refugees. Since the days when we held out the hand of friendship to Belgium, we have lost, as it seems completely and absolutely, the part of our tradition that had so much to do with our position and prestige in the world. We then took in and sheltered some thousands of Belgians, not, be it noted, the best of the Belgians. They were refugees with whom fear was more powerful than

patriotism, people who did not possess the moral courage to stand by their country through the trials of an invasion. But we took them in because it was our habit and our pride to welcome anyone in political or religious trouble. We had always done so, and we did it then, but ever since, as if to demonstrate the complete and total end of our old traditions, we have made it practically impossible for any unfortunate, whatever the reason, to find safety on our shores. Those few of us with whom the ancient right of asylum remains as a part of our national pride, feel it to be no light stain upon our honour that Germany should be left at this moment to hold out the hand of friendship to people who have faced starvation and death for religious ideals.

No less remarkable or difficult to explain is the mentality of our womenfolk, or their attitude towards the position of women and children in Russia to-day. It is hard to believe that our mothers have ever troubled to think out for themselves what is really happening. It requires no visit to Russia, no detailed evidence, no knowledge of any particular circumstances, to be able to judge, and to judge correctly, of these simple circumstances. Russia was a part of western civilisation. Russia was subject to western ideas of family life and of marriage. Russia is composed of men and women possessing the ordinary characteristics of all other men and women. Our mothers know, perhaps better than any of us, exactly what these things mean. They know that amongst us,

and amongst all people, is a proportion that find the restraints of western family life a little difficult to obey. They know how, notwithstanding the supreme and incalculable weight and force of moral and social pressure, considerable proportions of us constantly offend against the moral law. They know, further, how by religious and civil rule and regulation we contrive to make the penalties for offence severe and terrible, and they further know that, notwithstanding that severity and terror, the urge towards social rebellion is so natural and so irrepressible that a good proportion of irregularity still occurs. Then we come to Russia, and we find that every restraint is deliberately removed, and not only removed but held up as an evil. The man or woman in Russia who would get his or her proportion either of respectability or of food must declare himself or herself a Communist and, in so doing, an enemy of all these old-fashioned ideas. The inevitable consequence of this sort of thing would in any previous world have raised armies of crusaders from amongst our mothers alone, to save their Russian sisters, but to-day they sit by, impassive, indifferent to all the horrible suffering involved.

There are, of course, even amongst our womenfolk those who are bold enough to claim that in these facts and circumstances is to be found some new-fangled freedom which, giving a new status to women, is represented to be a sort of political and social progress. It requires boldness and courage of a very high order to argue along these lines.

Any such progress or freedom is, quite obviously, won at the price of a surrender to all the natural evil which society has hitherto thought it necessary to suppress.

Coming to details—although "details" is perhaps hardly the appropriate expression—we find the sort of results we should expect. There is at Moscow one of those widely advertised co-educational elementary schools which are maintained for the entertainment and edification of foreign visitors. The school has some 600 or 700 pupils, and photographs of the class rooms are a regular feature in the Soviet weekly bulletin issued by the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. There is also at Moscow, not far removed from the school, a very fine hospital, built by the Germans before the war, but maintained by the Bolsheviks, another of the tourists' show places. The tourist, however, is not informed that at one period in the summer of 1929, the maternity department of that particular hospital was housing over 100 girls under fourteen years of age from the Soviet co-educational school nearby. If only the post-war world could realise what the pre-war world would have done with a revolutionary institution in Europe which failed to restrain, let alone to punish, an evil of this kind, there would be no Russian Ambassador in London and, indeed, no Bolshevik Government in Moscow.

Just as August, 1914, may be said to mark the end of a great many of the best of the old-world values, so it marked the end of old-world rhetoric

and of the ability of our political and religious leaders to move the country with their appeal. Asquith's speech on the declaration of war was, perhaps, the last pronouncement by any great leader which was not received with the war-begotten cynicism and indifference which have affected us ever since. But I venture to reproduce, merely as samples for the benefit of the post-war man, two excerpts from speeches which, when delivered, stirred the nation to its depths, and if delivered to-day would, I presume, be epitomised for *The Times* and ignored by the rest of the Press.

I give first an extract from Gladstone's speech at Liverpool on the Armenian massacres in 1896, which was delivered, one of his biographers tells us, to a "vast audience," which "listened spellbound."

"The distinction (said Gladstone) of the massacres of Constantinople, as compared with those that had taken place before, was not in their moral infamy, it was in this—that to all the other dreadful manifestations which had formerly been displayed in the face of the world, there was added consummate insolence. Translate the acts of the Sultan into words and they become these : 'I have tried your patience in distant places, and I will try it under your own eyes. I have desolated my provinces ; I will now desolate my capital. I have found that your sensitiveness has not been effectually provoked by all that I have hitherto done. I will come nearer to you and see whether by vicinity I shall or shall not awake the wrath which has slept so long.' Some of it has been awakened ; and the weakness of diplomacy, I trust, is now about to be strengthened by the echoes of a nation's voice."

Mr. Gladstone, were he alive, would undoubtedly

have supported Kerensky's demand for moral intervention, if indeed he would not have suggested something still more active. No Armenian horror ever equalled the Bolshevik treatment of the Russian people.

To go further back still and to read Pitt on slavery brings us even nearer to the subject of this essay. In the following extract from Pitt's speech, delivered in 1792, I have altered in two places the single word " Africa " to read " Russia " :

" If we listen to the voice of reason and duty, and pursue this night the line of conduct which they prescribe, some of us may live to see a reverse of that picture from which we now turn our eyes with shame and regret. We may live to behold the natives of Russia engaged in the calm occupations of industry, in the pursuits of a just and legitimate commerce. We may behold the beams of science and philosophy breaking in upon their land, which at some happy period in still later times, may blaze with full lustre ; and joining their influence to that of pure religion, may illuminate and invigorate the most distant extremities of that immense continent. Then may we hope that even Russia, though last of all the quarters of the globe, shall enjoy at length, in the evening of her days, those blessings which have descended so plentifully upon us in a much earlier period of the world. Then also will Europe, participating in her improvement and prosperity, receive an ample recompense for the tardy kindness, if kindness it can be called, of no longer hindering that continent from extricating herself out of the darkness which, in other more fortunate regions, has been so much more speedily dispelled."

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